

INDUCTION PROGRAMS FOR BEGINNING TEACHERS:
MAKING A DIFFERENCE

by

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B.Sc., The University of British Columbia, 1982

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Department of Mathematics and Science Education)

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

December 1992

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Abstract

This study was based on the experiences of six first year teachers in a District sponsored induction program. The purpose of the study is two-fold: to gain some insights into the perceptions of beginning teachers (in terms of their perceived concerns, level of support and dilemmas encountered), and to determine the impact of the induction program on their first year teaching experiences. It is hoped that the results of this study will help school districts design more effective induction programs to support beginning teachers as they make the transition from a university-based preparation program to full-time employment in the schools.

Data were collected through focussed, semi-structured interviews. Over the duration of the year, four interviews were conducted with each first year teacher. The interviews were audiotaped and then transcribed verbatim. Through analysis of the transcripts, common perceptions were identified which captured some of the issues and concerns that they experienced in their first year of teaching.

The findings of this study lead to the general conclusion that beginning teachers experience difficulties in their first year of teaching and that these difficulties are "dilemmas" that appear to be endemic to teaching. In addition, the findings identify some specific support components of induction programs that are helpful in assisting beginning teachers survive their first year of teaching. Finally, the findings lead to a general conclusion that induction success is very much dependent on the context of each beginning teacher, specifically the characteristics of the beginning teacher, the context of the teaching situation, and the support available for that beginning teacher.

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DEDICATION

To My Mother Susan Lim
1931-1985

For Your Love, Support, and Guidance.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the support from my family, friends and colleagues in making this thesis possible.

Thank you . . .

- Dad, Jimmy, Sharon, Ron, Ken, Phillis, Peter, Christina, Jason, Susanna, and Samantha for your patience, care, and love,
- Alice, Maureen, Bruce, and Gord for your encouragement, humour, and assistance,
- Monica, Merrilee, and Denis for your comfort, care and thoughtful questions,
- Katey, Leigh, Margaret, Sue, Susan, and Tracy for your willingness to share your stories of being first year teachers,
- Nadine for your encouragement, thoughtfulness and collaboration,
- Dr. Gaalen Erickson and Dr. Jim Gaskell for your thoughtful questions, generous time, and encouragement!

Many thanks to these people for making this thesis possible!!!

Chapter 1

The Problem and Context

1.0 Introduction to the study

The complexity of teaching has continually increased over the years with initiatives like mainstreaming, child-centered curriculum, authentic assessment and other issues being introduced into the public schools which are responsible for the education of our children. Beginning teachers entering the profession need more support than ever as they make the transition from the universities to the schools to face these new challenges. Research indicates that one of the results of not providing support during the first years of teaching leads to high attrition rates amongst beginning teachers and that without support and assistance many potentially good teachers become discouraged and abandon teaching (Ryan et. al., 1980). Schlechty and Vance (1983) estimate that 30% of beginning teachers drop out of the profession during their first two years and 40 to 50% leave during the first seven years.

More recently and closer to home, research from Sullivan's *A legacy for learners: The report of the Royal Commission on Education* (1988), shows that beginning teachers leave the profession in large numbers. The attrition rate is reported at 44% by the end of the first five years of teaching. This is very distressing. What can be done to support beginning teachers?

In this chapter, the problem area, purpose, and methods used in this study will be outlined.

1.1 Rationale for the study - the problem area

The difficulties experienced by beginning teachers have consequences for our children.

A first-grader does not learn to read and begins to fall behind. A seventh-grader has trouble with his teachers and begins to give up. A high school student wants to pursue a career in science but is frustrated by the shortcomings of the new [mathematics] teacher. Students are the primary victims when beginning teachers fail. (Ryan, 1986, p.7)

Researchers point out that beginning teachers worry about surviving on a day to day basis. Veenman (1984) reviewed 83 studies of elementary and secondary teachers, and found that beginning teachers tend to perceive the following problem areas: classroom discipline; motivating students; dealing with individual differences; assessing students' work; relationships with parents; organization of class work; insufficient and/or inadequate teaching materials and supplies; and dealing with problems of individual students.

So overwhelming are the demands and problems experienced by these beginning teachers that 30% leave the teaching profession in the first two years and 40 to 50% leave during the first seven years (Schlechty & Vance, 1983). For some, it can be said that they never should have entered teaching in the first place; for many, however, there is evidence that we are losing some of the potentially best teachers as they find the occupation and working conditions unsatisfactory (Hart & Murphy, 1990).

The word "induction" comes from the Latin "inducere" meaning to lead in. Teachers are led into, rather than thrown into teaching. To avoid the high attrition amongst beginning teachers, induction programs need to be established. They are designed to support beginning teachers as they make the transition from the

university-based preparation programs to full-time employment in the schools. Induction programs help beginning teachers deal with teaching problems, issues and dilemmas so that they stay in the teaching profession. When induction programs offer initial support and instruction, over 95% of beginning teachers stay in teaching (Blackburn, 1977; Hegler & Dudley, 1987; Summers, 1987).

In 1980, McDonald and Elias, conducted a detailed study on beginning teachers and induction programs in Ontario. They describe the "facts" of their investigations:

- 1 Almost all teachers experience the transition period into teaching as the most difficult aspect of their teaching and career....
- 2 The major problems of and difficulties that teachers experience are readily identifiable. Most of them relate to the management and conduct of instruction....
- 3 The least studied aspect of this transition period is the fear, anxiety, and feelings of isolation and loneliness that appear to characterize it.
- 4 Almost all teachers report that they went through this transition period "on their own". They had little or no help available, and found help only through their own initiative.
- 5 There is probably a strong relationship between how teachers pass through the transition period and how likely they are to progress professionally to high levels of competence and endeavour (Vol. 1, pp. 42-43).

More recently, in British Columbia, *A legacy for learners: the report of the Royal Commission on Education* (Sullivan, 1988) Recommendation 6.10 states "that district-based induction programs be established cooperatively by school districts and teachers, and that they be characterized by special support services and carefully designed teaching assignments during the first year of induction" (p. 137). The research from this commission shows that beginning teachers leave the profession in large numbers and suggests that,

part of the reason for this apparent lack of commitment to the profession is teacher misassignment.... Beginning teachers are too often faced with unreasonable teaching assignments.... They may lack ready access to instant and expert advice on many problems they encounter during their first ten years.... The beginning teachers who were surveyed identified five additional major sources of teacher stress and anxiety: class size (61%), poor student behaviour (46%), limited equipment and supplies (24%), demands of special needs students (24%) and political problems (30%)" (Sullivan, 1988, p. 136).

There must be support for beginning teachers. The attrition figures, when coupled with a forecast of a national shortage of teachers, are distressing. The figures are even more distressing when they are linked to another common suggestion of research that the most qualified new teacher may be the first to leave.... Attrition amongst teachers is costly to both individuals and their institutions (Jensen, 1987, p. 30).

Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) state that,

each and every teacher has a direct responsibility for helping to shape the quality of the next generation of teachers.... But, however good new teachers may be in academic qualifications and experiences, they still represent only raw potential. The conditions of teaching especially at the beginning, influence and sometimes determine how good a new teacher will become. This one teacher will in turn affect the quality of learning experiences of hundreds of children over the next thirty years. What's worth fighting for is to make sure that these new teachers have better, much better, conditions for having a career. All teachers can make a contribution.... (pp. 78-79)

These findings illustrate the need to better understand the experiences of beginning teachers and for support programs to be established.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to gain more insight into beginning teachers' experiences in teaching (in terms of school-based support) and to understand their perceptions of the value of the District-wide component of an induction program

that was designed to support them in their first year of teaching. It is hoped that the results of the study can be used to design more effective support programs so that school districts can retain their new teachers by addressing such common problems as: stress; classroom management; misassignment; and isolation.

1.3 Research Questions

Two general questions and a sub-question provide focus for the study:

- What are the perceptions of six beginning teachers, participating in a District Induction Program, about their experiences teaching?
 - What types of support did they receive in their schools from the program?
- What are the beginning teachers' perceptions of the value of the District-wide component of the Induction Program?

1.4 Overview of the Methods

Focussed interviews were conducted with six first year teachers to determine their experiences in the Wellington* School District's Beginning Teacher Induction/Mentoring Program (*the actual name of the School District has been changed to maintain its confidentiality). Each participant was interviewed four times during the year. The focussed interviews were semi-structured and had a conversational manner to them. These interviews were transcribed verbatim from the audiotapes and then participants' experiences were analyzed. Themes of perceptions for each beginning teacher were identified and then common themes of experiences amongst these six beginning teachers were determined.

1.5 Limitations of the study

The study was limited to the experiences of these six beginning teachers in the context of the Wellington School District's Beginning Teacher Induction/Mentoring Program. Therefore, I cannot generalize to other beginning teachers or contexts. The data were collected through focussed interviews and thus the study was further limited by the participants' ability to recall and describe events, and their willingness to discuss their perceptions. The fact that all six of the participants were female also limits the study's generalizability. However, this study does provide an insight into the lives of six beginning teachers in an induction program and how they experienced their first year of teaching. The stories of these six beginning teachers offer insights into the way they thought, felt, perceived and dealt with the teaching issues they were encountering. Their stories tell about the complexities of teaching and how teaching is about managing professional dilemmas. Also, as a result of their stories, more questions and issues are raised as to the kinds of support that is necessary to ensure that beginning teachers experience successful first years of teaching.

1.6 Overview of the Study

This study is presented in six chapters. Chapter one introduces and briefly outlines the study in terms of its rationale, purpose, and methods. Chapter two reviews relevant literature on perceived concerns and types of support programs available for beginning teachers. Chapter three describes the methodology of the study while Chapter four, describes and analyzes the six mini-case studies. An analysis of common perceptions amongst all the six participants is presented in

Chapter five. In the final chapter, conclusions are presented and discussed, and implications for practice and possibilities for future research are identified.

Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

2.0 Introduction

This study describes both the perceptions of beginning teacher in their first year of teaching (in terms of concerns, level of support and dilemmas encountered) and their perceptions of the value of a District induction program. Collectively, the findings of many educational researchers provide an amalgam of information on perceived problems and concerns of beginning teachers. The literature on induction programs is more recent and is primarily descriptive in nature. Griffin (1985) expresses a concern about this and states that few research studies have been done on the effectiveness of induction programs.

In the first part of this chapter, a rationale for support program is described based on perceived concerns of beginning teachers. The second part of this chapter focusses on support programs in terms of types, goals and components. This overview will situate this research study in the field. The final portion of this chapter introduces two perspectives on teaching that will be further discussed in the final three chapters. They are: "teaching as managing dilemmas" (Cuban, 1992) and "teacher education as a continuous process" (Fullan & Connelly, 1987; Huling-Austin, 1990; Fullan, 1991).

2.1 Rationale for support programs

Schlechty and Vance (1983) estimate that about 30% of beginning teachers leave the profession during their first two years of teaching. The overall rate of

teacher turnover is 6% per year. The dropout of new teachers does not reduce to 6% until the fifth or sixth year. In addition, 40 to 50% leave during the first seven years. This means more than two-thirds of those teachers who leave do so in the first four years of teaching.

Furthermore, researchers identify that the quality of the teacher work force is influenced not only by those who enter teaching, but by those who stay in teaching. Fullan (1991) states, "in a word, the situation faced by first year teachers is overwhelming. Whether those teachers experience the sink or swim individualism characteristic of traditional school cultures or the inbuilt support, collaborative work cultures make a huge difference in whether they stay in the profession and how good they will become if they do" (pp. 303-4). Thus, in order to support beginning teachers, there is a need to identify their perceived problems and to establish programs that will support them as they face the challenges of teaching.

2.1.1 Perceived problems of beginning teachers

Veenman (1984) identifies the perceived problems of beginning teachers in schools where no assistance is provided. By identifying perceived problems, we can start to look at possible components of support programs to ensure that beginning teachers do not leave the profession in such staggering numbers.

Veenman (1984) defines a problem to be "a difficulty that beginning teachers encounter in the performance of their task, so that intended goals may be hindered" (p. 143). To gain an indication of the perceived problems of beginning teachers he conducted an international literature search. He restricted the sample to studies conducted from 1960 to the 1983. His aim was to review the relevant literature to

get an impression of the problems of beginning elementary and secondary teachers from an international perspective. In selecting the literature, he used the following criteria: "the studies must deal with problems with beginning teachers... and the studies must be based on empirical research...." (Veenman, 1984, p. 148). The international bibliographic search yield 83 studies of which 55 were from the United States and two were from Canada.

Veenman's findings reveal that the eight most frequently perceived problems (in rank order) are: "classroom discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing students' work, relationships with parents, organization of class work, insufficient materials and supplies, and dealing with problems of individual students" (1984, p. 160). Classroom discipline is by far the most serious problem identified.

Other studies (Anderson, 1963; Penrod, 1974; York, 1967; Williams, 1976; Taylor and Dale, 1971; Tisher et. al., 1979), reveal great similarities between the problems experienced by beginning teachers (Veenman, 1984) and the problems of beginning teachers as perceived by principals.

Ryan (1986) identifies a shorter list of common problems that face first year teachers: the shock of the familiar (classroom), students, parents, administrators, fellow teachers, and instruction and states that "these problems act in combination" (p. 16). He feels that "acknowledgement of these potential problems is the first step in the new teacher's professional growth. And there are some things that the teacher can do in this initial year that will make it easier to solve these problems. There are also things that school systems and teacher training institutions can do" (p. 30).

Covert, Williams and Kennedy (1991) find similar problems but add that "interesting findings of [their] study seem to have resulted from the rural positions to which the beginning teachers have been assigned" (p. 14). Three additional findings are: "few resources and multi-grade classrooms; problems attaining employment in a tight job market (that is, substitute teaching and rural posting); and concerns of teaching in an increasingly litigious society (that is, rights of abused children and rights of beginning teachers)" (p. 12). These concerns are expressed by other beginning teachers in both rural and urban schools.

Boccia (1991) also finds that "beginning elementary teachers... clearly focussed on topics related to the teaching task, including planning for instruction and securing student engagement in learning, rather than issues considered external to the teacher-student-content interaction, such as record keeping" (p. 15).

Odell (1986a) expands on the profession's understanding of the beginning teachers' problems. Unlike Veenman's study, her research takes place in schools where beginning teachers receive assistance, and involves direct observation of the needs of new teachers during their first year. In addition, instead of looking at perceived problems, she focusses on perceived needs. Integrating these observations yield the following rank order of the needs of beginning teachers: ideas about instruction; personal and emotional support; advice on resources and materials for teaching; information on school district policies and procedures; and ideas for additional techniques on classroom management.

Odell (1986c) comments that "this rank order clearly implies that for new teachers to whom assistance is provided, instructional needs are most important. In contrast, for new teachers to whom no assistance has been provided, needs related to

managing students predominate" (p. 21). In attempts to understand this difference, Odell hypothesizes that by "offering new teachers structured support at the start of their initial teaching year, school districts may help them diminish their discipline problems, with the result that new teachers, like veteran teachers, will be able to focus more on instructional rather than on disciplinary issues" (1986c, p. 21).

Further to this, Snow (1988) describes some of the difficulties she encountered in her first year of teaching. Her experiences, like many others, confirm what other researchers have shown about the needs of first year teachers. She maintains, "I did feel unprepared in a variety of areas" (p. 288). These five essential area are: long-term planning; subject matter development; evaluation; conducting parent interviews; and, time management. She suggests that,

instructors at the university [provide] future teachers... with practical skills [like learning day-to-day techniques, long-term planning, course outline designs]; first year teachers must be encouraged to approach the experienced teachers on the school staff... to ask to see lesson plans, copy worksheets and to look in on other teachers' classes; future teachers must be equipped with more than the "standard deviation", "histogram" language of measurement and evaluation; universities should offer a mandatory credit course designed to help teachers communicate effectively with parents; and finally [that] first year teachers must look closely at their priorities... time management courses should be offered by universities so that future teachers will be able to deal with the varying demands on their time and energy" (1988, pp. 291-293).

Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) agree with Snow's last suggestion and caution that "we must... be careful not to take advantage of new teachers and their seemingly endless energy by loading them with extra-curricular responsibilities and giving them the worst classes. This is a sure path to early burnout" (p. 28).

Lortie (1975) points out that, the beginning teacher is responsible for teaching students from the very first day and is expected to perform the very same tasks that

the veteran of 25 years performs. In addition to the high anxiety level noted among beginning teachers, the average beginning teacher is characterized by what Burden (1981 cited by Wildman & Borko, 1985, p. 7) describes as having:

- limited knowledge of teaching practices;
- limited knowledge of the teaching environment;
- a subject-centered approach to the curriculum and to teaching;
- conformity to the image of teacher as authority;
- limited professional insights and perceptions;
- feelings of uncertainty, confusion and insecurity; and
- unwillingness to try new teaching methods.

In addition to Burden's list, Clewitt (1984) finds that these problems are exacerbated by organizational structures. She finds these common problems amongst beginning teachers: classroom management and discipline; student motivation; adjustment to the physical demands of teaching, managing instructional tasks (organizing work, individualizing assessment and assignments, instruction, locating materials and supplies); sacrificing leisure time; and managing non-instructional demands of the position (establishing relationships with students, parents, colleagues; managing extra-curricular assignments; enlisting assistance of other staff members).

In terms of some specific issues, researchers have also discovered that three problems have significantly contributed to a difficult teaching situation. They identify misassignment, burnout and isolation.

In a study at the University of Austin, (Huling-Austin, L., Putnam, S., & Galvez-Hjornevik, C., 1986), new teachers reported that their discomfort came primarily from the difficulty of their teaching assignment. Clewitt (1984) explains that new teachers are assigned larger groups of students, more difficult students, and more duties of both an instructional and non-instructional nature. The teaching

assignment itself is also frequently unrelated to the new teacher's subject matter expertise and experience in teacher training.

Generally speaking, the teacher with the most experience requests and receives the most attractive assignments, leaving the more difficult assignments to beginning teachers, those with the least background and experience to handle these challenges (Sullivan, 1988). Difficult assignments can take several forms beside teaching in an area for which the teacher is not certified, such as working with the low-ability or unmotivated/disruptive students, having numerous class preparations, "floating" from classroom to classroom, or being responsible for demanding and time-consuming extra-curricular activities. These types of beginning teacher misassignments and overloads have been noted by researchers who conclude that beginning teachers are often put in situations which prevent them from succeeding in their first years of teaching (Hoffman, Griffin, Edwards, Paullissen, O'Neal & Barnes, 1985; Huling-Austin, Putnam & Galvez-Hjornevik, 1986). Lortie (1966) refers to this present pattern of inducting new teachers as the "Robinson Crusoe" model, while Houston and Felder (1982) compare such treatment to the "breaking of horses" (cited in Hoffman, Edwards, O'Neal, & Paullissen, 1986, p. 16). Hall (1982) describes the first year of teaching as "trial by fire".

The second issue is burnout. New teachers who are unable to cope with the stresses caused by these teaching problems (Veenman, 1984; Clewitt, 1984; Ryan, 1986; Odell, 1986a; Snow, 1988), may experience symptoms of job burnout early in their career. Maslach, Jackson & Schwab (1986) describe the characteristics of job burnout in teaching as chronic feelings of emotional exhaustion and fatigue, the

development of negative attitudes toward students, and a loss of feelings of accomplishment from teaching. Schwab and Iwanicki (1982), and Gold (1985) find younger teachers experience these feelings more frequently than older teachers. New teachers who experience these negative feelings are likely to be less effective in the classroom and eventually leave the profession. In some cases, individuals decide to stay on the job but detach themselves from responsibility for dealing with the problems they are unable to resolve (Jackson, Schwab, and Schuler, 1986; Dworkin, 1987).

For Gold (1989), "burnout is usually seen as the final step in a progression of unsuccessful attempts to cope with a variety of negative stress conditions. It is often the result of being stressed and not having an "out" or not being involved in some type of support system. Stress also occurs when there is an imbalance between the demands of the environment and the individual's response capabilities" (p. 66). Gold (1985), and Schwab and Iwanicki (1982) use the Maslach Burnout Inventory in their research to measure perceived levels of burnout amongst teachers. To provide direction to induction program developers, Gold (1987) proposes four key factors in induction program design which can reduce stress. They are:

- 1 the need for teachers to become aware of their own stress and its effect on them;
- 2 identification of perceived levels of burnout in the areas of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment;
- 3 the development of an individual stress reduction plan to deal with stress and burnout; and
- 4 establishment of support systems, both individual and group, to prevent loneliness and isolation and to provide necessary intervention strategies. (pp. 339-401)

She concludes that "stress in the life of a beginning teacher must be identified and reduced if burnout of young, gifted beginning teachers is to be eliminated"

(Gold, 1989, p. 69). Ayalon (1989) concurs with Gold. The findings of his study "underscore the importance of planning for a successful first year experience for teacher. Providing for a positive recognition and adequate time for planning and instruction, as well as reducing class size may reduce beginning teachers' burnout and consequently reduce teachers' attrition" (p. 5). He states that beginning teacher burnout is a serious problem in the schools and may affect the ability to perform effectively and ultimately has an impact on student learning and motivation.

The third issue for beginning teachers that has been raised in the literature is that of isolation. Cochran-Smith (1991) states, "there are powerful norms in most schools against collegiality" (p. 109). Little (1981) suggests that this lack of positive peer support is one of the conditions of teaching which can lead to job dissatisfaction and impede professional growth. Sarason (1971) describes the consequence of spending most of one's time with small children and having little contact with other adults as the "loneliness of teachers" (p. 106). In addition to this loneliness, Feinman-Nemser and Floden (1986) suggest that the "uncertainties of teaching are exacerbated by the fact that teachers cannot easily turn to one another for help and support. This reality is especially salient for the novice who must "sink or swim alone" (p. 517). Grant and Zeichner (1981) conclude that many beginning teachers identify informal interactions with experienced colleagues as a significant source of support.

Lortie (1975) suggests that teachers' unwillingness to share their failures and frustrations intensify the burden of failure. Beginning teachers adopt an individualistic response and are unable to see that the problems they are experiencing are common to all teachers. According to Lortie, it is primarily

through interactions with colleagues that beginning teachers are eventually able to cope with feelings of self doubt and gain the reassurance that they are making a difference in children's lives. Lortie's conclusion implies that the self-esteem of these beginning teachers is heightened through conversations with other teachers.

Hayes & Kilgore (1990) find this to be the case in their study and state that,

by discussing their concerns with other teachers, these beginning teachers would have been able to continue growing professionally. However, by limiting their conversations with others and avoiding explorations of their concerns, these teachers significantly narrowed their range of alternative explanations of classroom events and alternative strategies (p. 6).

These research studies on perceived problems and specific issues like misassignment, burnout and loneliness emphasize the need for establishing support programs. In the literature, many studies have been conducted to identify the specific areas of teacher development and this knowledge can assist in the design of more effective support programs.

2.1.2 Stages of Teacher Concerns

Odell (1986c), like other researchers (Burke, Fessler, & Christensen, 1984; Fuller, 1969; Katz, 1972), hypothesizes that practicing teachers progress through well-delineated stages of development. In broad terms, teachers seem first to have concerns about surviving from one day to the next. From these, they move to concerns about managing teaching responsibilities, and then to concerns about the impact of their teaching on students. Eventually, experienced teachers raise questions about the teaching profession (Odell & Loughlin, 1986). Odell (1987a) states that "for the most part, beginning teachers move ahead steadily in their

development as teachers. Progress seems to occur more rapidly when the system provides skilled assistance.... "

And thus, Odell's (1986a, 1986b) "functional approach" model, defines areas of support appropriate for first year teachers which reflect these stages of the development. This approach is characterized by empirically observing the actual functioning of an induction-support program and inferring new teachers' needs from the observed behaviours of beginning teachers and support personnel. The functional approach has the advantages of being dynamic and reflects the changing support needed as the development of the new teacher evolves, and it provides current information on which to base the delivery of induction support.

Fuller (1969) emphasises the need to identify teacher career stages and to design linkages between preparation institutions and schools for the continued support of new teachers. This work in teacher career stages confirms the need for this linkage and for the development of a program for the induction of new teachers.

Ryan (1986) describes Fuller's theory of teacher concerns as "teachers go through three stages once they begin teaching. If we included their preparation and student teaching, there would be four stages. The first stage might be called the "fantasy' stage, followed by the "survival" stage, then the "mastery" stage, and finally the "impact" stage. It was the first two stages that concerned the beginning teacher" (p. 10).

The fantasy stage begins when the person starts to think seriously about becoming a teacher. Most pre-service teachers fantasize about what their life as a teacher will be like. The fantasy stage is interrupted by student teaching which

provides an opportunity to act like a teacher and to try out skills and ideas.

For most beginning teachers the survival stage is the biggest challenge.

The timing and the intensity of first year teachers' survival stage varied immensely. Intensity was a personal matter.... But there was some consistency among first year teachers in the timing of the onset of the survival stage. The research suggested that the arrival of the curve of enchantment, which paralleled the survival stage, occurred in the Fall between the first of October and the Christmas break. However, it could start on the first day or the final week of school and it could last eight hours or eight months. The crisis could occur once or be a series of seeming disasters.... (Ryan, 1986, p. 12)

Usually the survival stage is over by February and the teacher passes into the "mastery of craft" stage, where the new teacher begins to learn the craft of teaching in a step-by-step fashion.

Several other authors support this teacher career stages theory (Burden, 1982; Unruh & Turner, 1970; Gregorc, 1973; Katz, 1972; Watts, 1980). When Veenman (1984) completed his study on perceived problems of beginning teachers, he commented on his findings as being "too general in that they do not consider the various teacher characteristics or individual differences which may influence teachers' perceptions and performance. Nor do they identify and describe the context so that we can understand how environments with varying supports and challenges affect the beginning teacher" (p. 160). He acknowledges three approaches that had been developed to look more carefully at the process of becoming a teacher (Developmental Stages of Concern: Fuller, 1969; Fuller & Bown, 1975; Cognitive Developmental Framework: Oja, 1981; Sprinthall & Thies-Sprinthall, 1983; Glassberg & Sprinthall, 1980; Teacher Socialization Framework: McArthur, 1981, Johnston & Ryan, 1980; Tabachnick et. al., 1983; Lacey, 1977). These "teacher development" approaches present "frameworks for a more comprehensive

understanding of the problems beginning teachers experienced....[and thus] these approaches provided some guidance in designing interventions for enhancing the developmental process" (Veenman, 1984, p. 160).

The descriptions of the problems and concerns of these first year teachers emphasize the need for collaboration between universities, school districts, and schools to help the new teachers survive.

2.2 Support programs for beginning teachers

Teacher induction has been defined as the transition from student teaching to teacher (Griffin, et. al., 1983) It is a process by which teachers are "led into", rather than thrown into teaching. Teacher induction is best understood in the larger context of teacher education, which often has been described as a continuum, represented by:

pre-service----->induction----->in-service

According to Huling-Austin (1990), if induction is to be viewed in this context, it is clear that programs to address the induction period (i.e., induction programs and internships) need to function both as logical extensions of the pre-service program and as entry points in a larger career-long professional development program.

Induction programs acknowledged that beginning teachers had recently completed teacher-preparation programs and still needed supervision and support similar to that which was available in the student phase. Such support enabled beginners to continue to develop their teaching skills while confronting the adjustment difficulties of the first years. From this transition stage, the teacher could then proceed to a staff-development program that provided opportunities for continued professional growth. (Huling-Austin, 1990, p. 535)

An induction program is a planned program intended to provide some

systematic and sustained assistance, specifically to beginning teachers (Zeichner, 1979). Others have described the purpose of these support programs to "develop in new members of an occupation those skills, forms of knowledge, attitudes and values that are necessary to effectively carry out their occupational roles" (Schlechty, 1985, p. 37), "assist new teachers to be professionally competent" (Tisher, 1982), and "encompass the mastery of two tasks - effective use of the skills of teaching and adapting to the social system of the school" (McDonald & Elias, 1980).

In the literature, both induction programs and internships are examples of such support programs. In the next part of this chapter, both these programs will be described based on a review of related descriptive studies.

2.2.1 Internships as support programs for beginning teachers

Titley (1984) defines "internship...as a transitional experience - a transition from the world of academic preparation to that of full professional responsibility... it bridges the gap between theory and practice" (p. 84). The advocates of internship for teachers seem to have borrowed the idea and the terminology from the internship employed in medical education.

Jacknicke and Samiroden (1991) state that literature on the subject of teacher internship reveal three major characteristics. First, a great deal of emphasis is directed at integrating theory and practice (Blackmore, 1968; Carney & Titley, 1981; Titley, 1984). Second, they are designed to "facilitate the transition from academic preparation to full professional responsibility" (Carney & Titley, 1981, p.11). "Third, notwithstanding these common characteristics in principles, there had been, and there continued to be, a wide range of programs all carrying the label "internship."

The structure of these programs showed considerable variation in duration, supervision, sponsorship, and the relationship to a teacher education program" (p. 100).

Internships range in length from 16 weeks (Carney & Titley, 1981; Lang, Cornish, & Trew, 1980) to a complete school year, and may occur after completion of undergraduate studies (Slentz, 1978) or integrated within an extended undergraduate program (Jones & Barnes, 1984). During these periods, the interns may be supervised by university staff, school staff, school district consultants, or representatives of all of these, depending on the sponsorship of the program. Some programs make provision for the interns to return to the sponsoring institutions on a regular basis for discussion while others include on-site, in-service sessions (Allen, 1986; Harker, 1978; Mickelson, 1980; Silvernail & Costello, 1983). Some internships are prerequisite to graduation or certification, while others replace the probationary or induction year (Lawrence, 1985). Interns may also be contracted and salaried by the local school board (Jacknicke & Samiroden, 1991, p. 100).

Titley (1984) describes the evolution of internships and considers them to have originated in Britain. The James Committee's Report on teacher education (Evans, 1978) and the White Paper on policy argue for an "induction year" in which beginning teachers would have a lightened workload and be released for about one-fifth of their time for in-service training. A crucial role in all of this is the assignment of "professional tutors" who would supervise and guide the beginners throughout the year.

The British notion of an induction year differs in some respects from the American concept of internship. Under the British system the teachers have already

received their teaching certificates and have actually been employed by an education authority. The induction year, then, does not lead to certification, but to permanency of employment. In the United States, the internship year precedes certification and involves no commitment from the school authorities to hire the intern upon completion of the year (Titley, 1984).

The adoption of internship as a feature of teacher education is most pronounced in the United States. The *47th Yearbook* (Rex, 1968) of the National Education Association, states:

the internship in teacher education is an integral part of the professional preparation of the teacher candidate, having been preceded by successful observation-participation and student teaching or equivalent clinical experiences in a school environment, and is planned and coordinated by the teacher education institution in cooperation with one or more school systems. The intern is contracted by and paid by a local school board, assigned a carefully planned teaching load for a school year, and enrolled in college courses that parallel his professional experience. The intern is supervised both by a highly competent teacher who is recognized for his supervisory capacity and is assigned released time to devote to the supervision of interns and by a college supervisor who makes a series of observations and works closely with the school supervisor and the intern. (pp. 18-19)

Internship, then, is perceived as an experience that follows the academic program and student teaching, and that acts as a transition to the stage of full professional responsibility. Many American internship programs are designed to meet the needs of specific or unusual teaching situations. Interns have far more freedom of action than student teachers and are paid (Titley, 1984, pp. 85-7).

According to Huling-Austin (1990), American internships serve people who are entering the profession through some other route than the traditional pre-service teacher education program. As such, internships often involve uncertified teachers on limited contracts who have reduced teaching responsibilities and

increased support and supervision.

Internships often included many of the same features as induction programs, but they were likely to focus more heavily on training than more traditional induction programs, which tended to emphasize transition from student teaching to teacher. Furthermore, the role and responsibilities of the intern typically were substantially different from those of the first year teacher (Huling-Austin, 1990, p. 536).

Internship programs in teacher education in Canada owe much to the example of medical education and to American influence. According to Titley (1984), "Canadian programs were difficult to classify because the concepts of "extended practicum" and "internship" were often used interchangeably with understandable confusion" (p. 89).

There has been a national trend evident in Canada since the mid 1970s of extending the period of student teaching in teacher education. These extended practica sometimes last up to sixteen weeks and are often called "internships." As Buski, of the Alberta Teachers' Association, (1988) describes it,

in Canada we have two forms of induction years. One of these has been that form of help advocated and planned by teacher organizations and/or school systems, an assistance [induction] program....and the other form is the internship which is a planned experience utilizing a range of resource personnel and with the involvement of teacher preparation institutions. The traditional method of bridging the theory into practice gap in the preparation of teachers has been "student teaching." By definition, an extended practicum is a program of structured and supervised full-time in-school experiences of several weeks in duration occurring as part of the pre-service preparation, the successful completion of which is required for degree completion and teacher certification (Canadian Teachers' Federation, 1988, p. 125).

A survey of 1987/88 university calendars reveal a practicum can last between four to sixteen weeks. Current Canadian Teachers' Federation policy on this matter calls for a minimum of 12 semester hours in the practicum.

Internships/extended practica that have taken place in Canada include: the

Universities of Saskatchewan and Regina (since 1977), University of Victoria/Saanish school district (since 1973), Project MEET at McGill Elementary Education Teaching Teams (from 1967-8), University of Manitoba's graduate internship for teachers (since 1975), Queens' University, Kingston Ontario (since 1974). The Saanich-University of Victoria and Project MEET programs are combined and continue course work at the university while the Manitoba program follows graduation and certification.

There has been descriptive reports on the internship programs at the University of Alberta - the Initiation to Teaching Project (Ratsoy, Friesen, & Holdaway, 1989), and the University of Saskatchewan (Crozier-Smith, 1988; Genge, 1988; Robinson & Ryan, 1989).

2.2.2 Induction programs as support for beginning teachers

The second type of support program for beginning teachers are induction programs which are designed to support transition for beginning teachers, teachers new to a district or school, and administrators. Currently, induction programs are being established in Canada and the United States in response to perceived need. Specifically, major written reports in Canada have helped to establish Canadian Induction Programs. In Canada, most of the activity has been in Ontario as a result of the study by McDonald and Elias (1980) which probed into the problems of beginning teachers and induction programs.

More recently, the issue of teacher education is addressed by Fullan and Connelly's (1987) paper entitled: *Teacher Education in Ontario: Current Practice and Options for the Future* which is written for the Provincial Teacher Education

Review Steering Committee. In this paper, they write that "induction is the key to beginning to build a true continuum in teacher education" (p. 37). They describe "the notion of collective professionalism...[where] teachers and other support staff act as small groups of professionals interacting frequently in the course of planning, testing new ideas, attempting to solve different problems, and assessing effectiveness..." (p. 51). The implications, then, are that "the profession can play a greater role in training, licensing, hiring, inducting, continuing in-service, and firing" (p. 51) of teachers. Thus, they proposed Recommendation 6.1 "that a two-year period of induction become mandatory for all teachers.... [that] the teaching load during the first year of induction be no more than 60% and no more than 80% in the second year" (p. 76). In 1988, the Ontario Teacher Education Review Steering Committee, recommended that an induction phase become mandatory by 1995 and that pilot projects be funded in the interim (Fullan & Connelly, 1990). Since then, several individual school boards have initiated induction programs of their own and sometimes in cooperation with local universities.

Another Ontario report by Cole and McNay (1988) identifies the need and four possible goals of induction programs.

- 1 Orientation: integrating beginning teachers and teachers new to the setting, into the professional and social fabric of the school, school district, and neighborhood community;
- 2 Psychological support: promoting teachers' professional and personal self-esteem and well-being;
- 3 Acquisition and refinement of teaching skills: attending to the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in those areas related to daily classroom teaching in which teachers feel in most need of support; and
- 4 Development of a philosophy of education: including habits of reflective practice and a commitment to continued professional growth (p. 10).

In British Columbia, the B.C. Royal Commission's Report on Education

(Sullivan, 1988), Recommendation 6.10 states "that district-based induction programs be established cooperatively by school districts and teachers, and that they be characterized by special support services and carefully designed teaching assignments during the first year of induction" (p. 136). In addition to this, the *Teacher Education - A position paper*, by the B. C. Teachers' Federation (1991), Recommendation 18.1 states that "the BCTF continue to work with the education community in developing induction and mentorship programs that have the following characteristics:

- 1 local association involvement in the design and operation of the program including the selection of mentors;
- 2 training of mentors;
- 3 reduced teaching assignment for the inductee in terms of class, size, composition, subjects or grades and administrative demands;
- 4 flexible and discretionary planning time;
- 5 ongoing professional development;
- 6 reflection of such professional values as collegiality, collaboration, critical reflection on teaching practice, open communication, and professional autonomy;
- 7 adequate funding by the provincial government. (p. 24)

More recently, in New Brunswick, (1992) the Report of the Commission on Excellence in Education, Recommendation 1.3 states that,

during the first year, a teacher be assigned a light teaching load (which would extend to extra-curricular, committee, and supervisory duties), be provided with a mentor teacher chosen for his or her excellence in teaching and for the ability to work well with and to help colleagues, and be given such other support as may be necessary to get off to a successful start in teaching (p. 29).

These provincial teacher education reports have influenced the establishment of induction programs in Canada. Similar reports have shaped the activities in the United States.

According to Huling-Austin (1990), a number of national reports from the

mid-1980's addressed the issue of teacher induction and internships. The best known of these are the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education's *NCATE Redesign* (1985); the Holmes Group report, *Tomorrow's teachers* (1986); and the Carnegie Forum report, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* (1986). All three reports recommend a supported induction period for beginning teachers. The *NCATE Redesign* (1985) suggests that the teacher education institution maintain and develop relationships with its graduates and provide assistance to first year teachers when needed.

The Holmes Group (1986) proposes that beginning teacher support systems be carried out through an induction year consisting of a year-long, paid, and well-supervised internship. The Carnegie Forum report (1986) recommends the development of a new professional curriculum in graduate schools of education and which leads to a Master in Teacher degree, based on systematic knowledge of teaching, including internships and residencies in the schools.

In the Association of Teacher Educators' Blue Ribbon Task Force report, *Visions of Reform: Implications for the Education Profession* (1986), an explicit recommendation related to teacher induction was also made.

According to Huling-Austin (1990), it is clear from these national reports that the issue of teacher induction is firmly planned in the national spotlight of educational reform. Huling-Austin (1990) describes that many of these "teacher induction programs were collaborative in nature and involved two or more sponsoring educational agencies including local school districts, colleges and universities, regional educational service agencies, and state departments of education" (p. 538).

Induction has become a focus in education and this is evident in the number of theme issues from many educational journals which include: *Educational Leadership* (1985), *Journal of Teacher Education*, (1986), *Teacher Education*, (1986), *Kappa Delta Pi Record* (1986), *Action in Teacher Education* (1987), *Theory into Practice* (1988), *Journal of Staff Development*, (1990), and *Orbit* (1991).

In the next section, goals and components of induction program are described as summarized from the literature review.

The goals of induction programs vary greatly but in the literature review of the research done on induction programs (Huling-Austin et. al., 1989), five typical goals included, explicitly or implicitly, in most induction programs or internships are to:

- 1 improve teaching performance;
- 2 increase the retention of promising beginning teachers during the induction years;
- 3 promote the personal and professional well-being of beginning teachers by improving teachers' attitudes toward themselves and the profession;
- 4 satisfy mandated requirements related to induction and certification;
- 5 transmit the culture of the system to beginning teachers (p. 9).

Huling-Austin (1988) conducted a research synthesis of 17 studies of beginning teacher programs. The practices reported in each study were examined in terms of their success in achieving the five goals of induction programs. In this synthesis she reached four other important conclusions:

first, induction programs must remain flexible enough to respond to the emerging needs of individual beginning teachers. *Second*, that support/mentor teachers are consistently recognized by participating beginning teachers as the most beneficial aspect of the program. The *third*, [there is a] link between the difficulty of the initial teaching assignment and the success of beginning teachers.... *Fourth*, we must educate individuals both within and outside our profession regarding the need for beginning teacher programs" (in Hirsh, 1990, p. 3).

To help educational leaders consider the full range of purposes that teacher induction programs can serve, the April 1987 *ERIC Report: Perspectives on Teacher Induction: A Review of the literature and promising program models*, highlights some perspectives found in the current literature on teacher induction. It is organized around five general purpose statements:

- 1 Address perceived needs of beginning teachers:
Johnston & Ryan, 1980; Veenman, 1984
- 2 Improve teaching skills of beginning teachers:
Ellett & Capie, 1982; Brophy & Good, 1986; Schlechty, 1985
- 3 Integrate beginning teachers into the school community:
Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1985; Bird & Little, 1986; Schlechty, 1985
- 4 Resolve predictable concerns of beginning teachers:
Fuller & Bown, 1975; Hall & Loucks, 1978; Huling-Austin, Putnum & Galvez-Hjornevik (1986).
- 5 Foster adult development of beginning teachers:
Glassberg & Sprinthall, 1980; Feinman-Nemser & Floden, 1986; Sprinthall & Thies-Sprinthall, 1983. (ERIC Digest, 1987, p. 9, figure 1)

Depending on the selected purpose(s) of the induction program, different program components can be designed. Huling-Austin et. al. (1989) find in the literature review on teacher induction programs some of these design components:

- a printed materials of employment conditions and school regulations;
- b orientation meetings and visits;
- c seminars on curriculum and effective teaching topics for beginning teachers;
- d training sessions for mentor teachers and other support personnel;
- e observations by supervisors/peers/assessment teams and/or videotaping of the beginning teacher in the classroom;
- f follow-up conferences with observers;
- g consultations with experienced teachers;
- h support (helping/buddy/mentor) teachers;
- i opportunities to observe other teachers (in person or through subject-specific videotapes);
- j released time/load reduction for beginning teachers and/or support teachers;
- k group meetings of beginning teachers (for emotional support);

- l assignment to a team teaching situation;
- m credit courses for beginning teachers (university and/or local credit);
- n beginning teacher newsletters and other publications designed to provide helpful teaching tips for the novice teacher (pp. 14-15).

It is unlikely that any single induction program will contain all of these components, but these represent the building blocks of most programs. Programs vary greatly across sites, depending upon the priorities and resources of their sponsoring agencies.

As to which components are most common, Marshall (1983) attempts to identify induction program components by surveying 72 districts across the United States. She finds that 85% of the programs offer meetings or workshops focussed on beginning teacher needs prior to the opening of school; 57% assign an experienced fellow teacher as a "buddy" to the beginning teacher; and 44% provide a handbook containing such items as school or district philosophy, practices, and procedures.

In addition, Lewis (1980) finds five specific support activities commonly recommended in the literature: reduced workloads; release time; opportunities for discussion with other beginning teachers; opportunities to observe other experienced teachers and to better understand relationships with other staff and the community; and a mentor formally assigned to assist beginning teachers, but not to evaluate them.

Similarly, Grant and Zeichner (1981) studied the kind of support activities in induction programs by surveying 72 first year teachers from a number of districts, representing different grade levels. They categorized their responses in three groups: formal support (pre-assignment contracts, orientation, in-service); informal support (co-workers volunteering information, assistance, or listening to their

concerns); and, job embedded support (release time, reduced class size, exemptions from non-teaching responsibilities, and teacher buddy systems). They concluded that beginning teachers mostly received formal support.

The Association of Teacher Educator's Commission on Teacher Induction (Kester & Marockie, 1987) surveyed 1100 local school systems in 17 states about their induction programs and grouped their activities under three general headings: purposes; orientation; and evaluation and assistance. The orientation activities provide beginning teachers with information on such topics as: the history and philosophy of the district; employment benefits and procedures; school calendar; job descriptions; and logistical details on purchasing supplies, duplicating materials, planning and conducting field trips. The evaluation activities focus on information beginning teachers needed to know about evaluation criteria and the processes that would be used to determine when tenure was earned or advancement was deserved. The assistance activities include collegial encouragement, training in classroom management strategies and discipline procedures, and more long-term professional development activities.

Out of the 112 programs, Kester and Marockie (1987) report that 96 programs incorporated special in-service activities, 95 programs involved frequent evaluations of beginning teachers and 65 programs assigned "buddy" teachers. The 112 induction programs vary in length (one-half day to planned activities over three years), are either mandatory or elective, and involve a variety of people (principal, department chairs, experienced teachers etc.,).

The most researched component of induction programs is the support teacher. Research provides a great deal of useful information about the role and

function of the support teacher (who is also referred to as the mentor teacher, buddy teacher, helping teacher, or teacher consultant). Brooks (1987) states that there is reason to believe that the assignment of an appropriate support teacher may well be the most powerful and cost-effective intervention in an induction program. Huling-Austin, Putman, and Galvez-Hjornevik (1986) suggest a number of factors that can greatly contribute to the success of the beginning teacher/support teacher arrangement. These factors include:

- 1 selecting a highly competent experienced teacher who is willing to serve as a support teacher;
- 2 both teachers teaching in the same discipline with one or more common preparations;
- 3 having the teachers' classrooms located in close proximity to each other;
- 4 having common planning period;
- 5 pairing teachers with compatible professional ideologies; and
- 6 pairing teachers with compatible personalities (p. 14).

They acknowledge that it will not always be possible to employ all these criteria when pairing beginning teachers with support teachers, but whenever these factors can be incorporated when making assignments, success of the arrangements is likely to be facilitated.

The role of the mentor or supervisor appears to be crucial. According to Wildman (1985), "a mentor should be an opener or doors, a role model, a confidant, and a successful leader. Most of all, the mentor should be dedicated to the success of the protege" (p. 31). In a survey of 290 new teachers participating in a beginning teacher program, Huffman and Leak (1986) find that it is important to have mentors with knowledge and experience in the same subject, specialty, or grade level as the novice teachers they assisted. Respondents of this survey also suggest that adequate time for informal planning and conversations between mentors and beginning

teachers is valuable. Huling-Austin (1985) suggests that experienced teachers can provide assistance in three ways to beginning teachers: impromptu conversations; prearranged conferences; and classroom observations.

In a telephone interview with 205 beginning teachers, Yosha (1991) determines that "85% respond that the mentor teachers makes a real difference in the beginning teacher becoming a more competent teacher" (p. 2). In addition, in a focus group discussion with 20 beginning teachers, Yosha (1991) finds that "emotional and moral support are the number one most valuable role that the mentors provide for the beginning teachers" (p. 3). These previous findings are reinforced by Fox and Singletary (1986) who state that it is just as important for a new teacher to relate closely and substantively to his or her peers as to a mentor. "Frequently, regular meetings with individuals who are experiencing similar situations and problems provide new teachers with an opportunity to exchange views. These exchanges can also minimize feelings of isolation" (p. 41). Thus, it is important to have a forum for beginning teachers to meet to interact and discuss first year teaching experiences.

Thus from the literature, components of induction programs are influenced by the identified concerns of beginning teachers in their specific contexts. A truly reactive induction support program will track the changing concerns of new teachers continuously over time and appropriately adjusts the nature of the support offered in an attempt to encourage teaching expertise (Odell, 1986b).

Odell (1987b) raises three issues that induction program developers should consider: formal program structure, personnel and pedagogical content. A structural consideration might be in identifying who is responsible for the program

initiation and implementation. She advises that "no matter which agency initiates the program, it is desirable for states' boards of education, local school districts, and colleges of education to cooperate... so that any resultant program will offer integrated support involving evaluation, orientation and developmental components" (p. 73). Personnel considerations might be in identifying who is a new teacher and who can be a support teacher. Pedagogical considerations might include identifying the role of the support teacher (assistance versus assessment), determining the content of the training program for mentors, and determining the content of the support for the beginning teachers.

From the literature review thus far, it appears that induction programs can be an important aspect to consider in supporting beginning teachers. Huling-Austin (1986b) suggests that such programs can reasonably be expected to attain the five goals of induction programs identified earlier in this chapter, but she points out that induction programs cannot reasonably be expected to:

- overcome major problems in the school context such as misplacements, overloads, overcrowded classes etc.;
- develop into successful teachers those beginning teachers who enter the profession without the background, ability, personal and characteristics necessary to constitute the potential to be acceptable teachers; or
- substantially influence the long-term retention of teachers in the profession if additional changes are not made in the educational system at large (p. 5).

Thus, beginning teacher support programs should be viewed as a substantial strategy for reducing the high rate of attrition amongst teachers in the early years of their teaching careers. But many other programs, incentives, and changes in schools and in teachers' career experiences should also be considered when any comprehensive plan to reduce overall attrition is considered (Smith-Davis &

Cohen, 1989).

A model to guide the development of teacher induction programs is proposed by Huling-Austin and Murphy (1987). Induction success is described as a function of the beginning teacher, the context, and the support program (p. 38):

$$\text{Induction Success} = f(\text{BT} \times \text{Context} \times \text{Support program})$$

This model suggests an individualized approach to induction, but this is not to suggest that it is necessary to design a totally different induction program for each beginning teacher.

Before concluding the literature review on teacher induction, it is important to remember Griffin's (1985) findings that the bulk of research is descriptive. These studies have contributed positively to understanding the needs and concerns of beginning teachers but we need to do more research in other areas. He raises these five issues for consideration:

- 1 We must determine to what degree do research findings, when used as content for teacher induction programs, accomplish the same pupil outcomes as are reported in the original correlations studies.
- 2 We must find out, from a variety of perspectives, if teacher induction programs contribute to or hinder new teachers' estimations of their own efficacy, and whether or not a perceived sense of efficacy is related to effectiveness.
- 3 We must discover the degree to which teacher induction programs do, in fact, serve as a "gatekeeping" function, sorting more effective teachers into schools and less effective teachers out.
- 4 We must determine whether or not the procedures and practices associated with teacher induction programs are, as is claimed, valid and reliable.
- 5 We must gain a better understanding of the ways in which current and proposed induction programs align with conceptions of excellence in teaching (pp. 45-46).

Ashburn (1987) agrees with Griffin and cautions induction program developers to consider these issues. These questions are critical and provide helpful

directions for research. Griffin states that "we can increase our knowledge about teacher induction and develop induction programs with greater certainty of success if we ask effective research questions and use an appropriate blend of qualitative and quantitative research methods to answer these questions" (p. 42). Other educators have suggested critical needs in induction research. McCaleb (1985) points out that relatively few studies have been conducted which investigate the effects of specific induction interventions, and very little research has been conducted to test the cumulative effects of specific induction programs. Brook (1987), stresses that it is critical research on induction programs involving multiple factors operating in multiple contexts be conducted from a variety of perspectives, using multiple approaches and methodologies.

In addition, it seems that only a few studies have begun to look at the influence of context on the teacher induction process (Murphy & Huling-Austin, 1987). Zeichner (1982) points out that attempts to influence the performance of beginning teachers should recognize the importance of the conditions in the workplace and recommends viewing induction as a reciprocal process between individuals and institutions.

Fox and Singletary (1986) point out that few induction programs emphasize the development of a "reflective orientation and the skills necessary to self-evaluation" (p. 12). Another issue is the potential for confusing "assessment" with "evaluation" in an induction experience:

An effective mentoring process is built on a foundation of mutual trust. The objective of the process is assistance. Both are placed in serious jeopardy if the mentor is saddled with evaluation responsibilities. Assessment, however, is an important part of the mentoring process which allows the protege self-criticism and direction for improvement. Programs can resolve this conflict by

appointing separate evaluators or evaluation teams which meet with the protoge and mentor to discuss the performance evaluations (ERIC Digest, 1986c, p. 1).

Collectively, these cautionary voices are extremely valuable to the profession in determining both the direction and focus for future research efforts related to teacher induction.

Before concluding this chapter, one additional perspective on teaching should be introduced, "teaching as managing dilemmas" (Cuban, 1992), and one perspective needs to be re-identified: "teacher education as a continuous process" (Fullan & Connelly, 1987; Huling-Austin, 1990; Fullan, 1991).

2.3 Perspectives on teaching

Two perspectives will be discussed in this section to provide a context for chapters three, four and five.

2.3.1 Teaching as managing dilemmas

Veenman (1984), considers a problem "a difficulty that beginning teachers encounter in the performance of their task, so that intended goals may be hindered" (p. 143). Cuban (1992), agrees with this definition and states that "problems are fairly routine, structured situations that produce some level of conflict because a desired goal is blocked..." (p. 6). Thus, from Veenman and Cuban, it appear that there are implied solutions to problems. However, Cuban also suggests that in teaching, there are problems that have no solution no matter how much experience one has. He calls these problems "dilemmas" and defines them as "conflict-filled situations that require choices because competing, highly prized values cannot be fully satisfied... [and] tensions surface when there is insufficient time to accommodate

these values.... Dilemmas, then involve choices, often moral ones. They end up with good-enough compromises, not neat solutions..." (pp. 6-7).

Given this definition of a dilemma, it appears that with these "good-enough compromises" among values, we must continuously renegotiate the outcomes. Thus, as Cuban suggests, "we end up managing recurring dilemmas, not solving problems" (1992, pp. 6-7). Furthermore, Cuban suggests that educators who repeatedly failed to solve problems are left with "a debris of disappointment, even cynicism" (p. 9). To avoid feeling this guilt of failure, he proposes that many educational problems without solutions be reframed as "dilemmas". Thus, teaching is about managing dilemmas.

2.3.2 Teacher education as a continuous process

The second perspective shared by many researchers (Fullan & Connelly, 1987; Huling-Austin, 1990; Fullan, 1991), and was introduced in the previous section, is that teacher education is a continuous process and should be viewed to be on a continuum: pre-service----->induction----->in-service. This perspective implies that there needs to be opportunities for collaboration amongst educational agencies to provide the optimum teacher education.

Cuban (1992), maintains that in teaching, we should view our collective work as a means for "building professional communities". Cuban is distressed by the current "absence of community among educators engaged in teaching" (p. 9) and describes three competing groups of educators caught up in conflicts.

Over the last century, at least three overlapping cultural values have created conflicts. The *university culture*, prizing the values of reflection, rigorous analysis, and scientifically produced research,

competes against values within a *professional school* of applying disciplinary knowledge to practical situations in order to prepare the next generation of teachers, administrators, and researchers. Both sets of values embedded in university structures compete against another set of values within *schools*. Their action is prized. The knowledge that is admired is concrete, relevant, drawn from experience, and applied to the practical dilemmas of teaching and learning (Clifford & Guthrie, 1988; Goodlad, 1990, cited in Cuban, 1992, p. 9).

Cuban concludes that as a result of these competing values, there is a "stunted sense of community among educational researchers and practitioners" (p. 9). Cuban wonders whether this "trilemma" can be "reframed to seek another basis for enhanced professionalism?" He is concerned about the need to "create intellectual communities among practitioners and professors that develop shared standards of teaching practice, and engage in sustained conversations over dealing with our common moral dilemmas" (p. 9) and suggests that the common ground that joins teachers, teacher educators and researchers is the fact that teaching is ridden with dilemmas.

Teaching requires making concrete choices among competing values for vulnerable others who lack the teacher's knowledge and skills, who are dependent upon the teacher for access to both, and who will be changed by what the teacher teaches, how it is taught, and who that teacher is (Dewey, 1923; Fenstermacher, 1990; Floden & Clark, 1988; Greene, 1986; Jackson, 1986; Schon, 1983; Sockett, 1991; Soder, 1990; Tom, 1984; cited in Cuban, 1992, p. 9).

Cuban reasons that if teaching is a blend of the practical and the moral and that it is a continuous coping with enduring dilemmas, then the three cultures of university researchers, professors in schools of education and classroom teachers, can work together as members of an intellectual community to deal with these dilemmas. Cuban (1992) states that,

serious scholarly examination of the uncertainties, ambiguities, and moral dilemmas of teaching students at different levels of formal schooling is precisely one basis for assembling intellectual communities among educators. Such collaborative inquiry into core

teaching activities common to all levels of schooling invigorated by respect of professors for wise practitioners and of practitioners for thoughtful professors could forge coherent communities of researchers, professional educators, and practitioners (p. 10).

Fullan (1991) also supports this perspective. These perspectives "teaching as managing dilemmas" and "teacher education as a continuous process", imply that all educators have opportunities to work together to manage dilemmas while building professional communities.

2.4 Summary

The literature review provides an appropriate context for the study which will be described in the next few chapters. The review provides a brief summary of perceived problems of beginning teachers, an awareness of the goals and components of induction programs, and raises issues around the design and implementation of induction programs.

In the next part of the thesis, a research study which involves six beginning teachers in an induction program is described. Their perceptions as first year teachers in an induction program provide insights into determining the value of the program in supporting them in their transition from student teachers to classroom teachers.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of the study is to gain more insight into beginning teachers' experiences teaching (in terms of their concerns, level of support, and dilemmas encountered) and to understand their perceptions of the value of the induction program that was designed to support them in their first year of teaching. In this chapter, two major aspects are described: the context of the study, and the description of the study. The context describes where the study took place and the characteristics of the induction program; the description of the study includes a discussion of the recruitment process, a description of the research team, and the methodology involved in the collection and analysis of the data.

3.1 The Context - Setting for the Study

Wellington School District is a medium-sized urban school district which employs approximately 1300 teachers. During the 1991/92 school year, 85 beginning teachers were hired to the Wellington School District. All of these teachers participated in the Wellington School District's Beginning Teacher Induction/Mentoring Program. In this district, there are a total of nine secondary schools and forty elementary schools.

Six of the 85 beginning teachers volunteered to be participants in this study. Four of them were employed in elementary schools while two of them were employed in secondary schools. Details of each of these schools and of each

participant will be given in Chapter four preceding each of the mini-case studies.

The purpose of the Wellington School District's Beginning Teacher Induction/Mentoring Program was to support all beginning teachers as they made the transition from the university to the school. Specifically, the three goals were:

- 1 to provide a stimulating and supportive introduction to the teaching profession;
- 2 to create an environment of professional dialogue in which all participants become reflective co-learners; and
- 3 to provide support with management issues.

Participants in this induction program included beginning teachers, mentor teachers, professional development chairs, administrators, members of the district resource team, area superintendents, and representatives from the teachers' association. The induction activities were monitored by the Wellington School District Beginning Teacher Induction Advisory Committee.

The program had both district-organized and school-based components. Participants were invited to attend district workshops on topics identified by beginning teachers while school teams provided information, resources and support for specific needs (such as co-planning, classroom visits, peer coaching, peer observation, and workshop attendance). The District supported both components by providing funds for classroom release and through the members of the district resource team.

The District component of the induction program began with a two day orientation to the District in late August 1991. This event was designed to enable new teachers to meet each other and district personnel, help them set goals for the first term, review basic classroom management, and establish personal priorities. A beginning teacher handbook was distributed which contained information about

district personnel and resources, as well as information participants might find useful in their work.

A full day introductory session was offered in the second week of September with the expectation that all teachers and administrators involved in the program attend. Administrators attended the early morning segment, mentors attended until lunch and beginning teachers attended the full day. Throughout the year, a variety of workshops were offered on topics identified by the beginning teachers. Topics for term one included: classroom management; ways of working together; assessment; and communicating with parents. Topics for term two included planning for diversity and active learning. These topics were selected based on participants' feedback. Each district session was offered three times: two mornings and one after school for any teacher (beginning, mentor and others who were interested). Members of the district resource team organized and presented these sessions and were available for follow-up. Two sharing sessions in January 1992 were organized for participants from different schools so they could discuss district and school programs, concerns and interests.

Evaluation of the induction program was both formative and summative. Data were collected from all participants. Formative evaluation took the form of workshop evaluations, questionnaires, sharing sessions, and reports from administrators. Summative evaluation occurred in three forms: a survey sent in May to all participants to determine what they found valuable about the program and what changes they would suggest; a sharing session in June; and a final evaluation conducted by the Wellington School District Beginning Teacher Induction Advisory Committee.

3.2 Description of the Study

This section describes the recruitment process, research team and methodology.

3.2.1 Recruitment Process

The volunteers for this study were recruited at the full day introductory sessions in September. The information pertaining to the study was described (purpose, time commitment, confidentiality, methodology) and a letter of request was distributed to interested beginning teachers. Interested participants were asked to complete and return a consent form (see Appendix A for the recruitment letter and consent form). Six of the 85 beginning teachers volunteered to participate in the study by returning their signed consent form. The criteria for selection was based on the beginning teacher volunteering for participation as indicated by a signed consent form. All six volunteers were accepted and were sent a letter of confirmation (which reviewed the study's purpose, confidentiality, methodology, interview schedule; see Appendix B). Pseudonyms were selected for each volunteer to ensure confidentiality. Of these six volunteers, four of them (Katey, Leigh, Margaret, and Sue) were elementary school teachers and two of them (Susan and Tracy) were secondary school teachers. All six volunteers were female.

3.2.2 Researchers

In this study, two researchers were involved in collecting the data. Nadine was a research assistant (and a doctoral candidate), and I was a teacher consultant (and a member of the Wellington School District resource team). Nadine collected

interview data from four of the six participants while I collected interview data from the other two participants. Nadine and I worked closely together to design the interview questions and met to reflect on the interview experience after each set of interviews. This collaborative research relationship was effective. Throughout the study communication of thoughts, ideas, and feelings about the various aspects of the study, was done through regular telephone conversations and meetings.

3.2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Data were gathered through, what Yin (1989) terms, focussed interviews. Focussed interviews allow the interviewer/researcher to engage in an indepth conversation with the interviewee/participant around a series of focus questions. This methodology was best suited to the study's purpose which was to gain insights into beginning teachers' experiences (perceived concerns, nature of the support received, and dilemmas encountered). Focussed interviews provided the opportunity to hear their perceptions and to get elaborations to clarify the experiences when necessary; other forms of data collection (like questionnaires) would not have provided this flexibility. Four interviews were conducted with each of the six participants over an eight month period (see Appendix C for the interview schedule). The first set of interviews was conducted in October 1991, the second in December 1991, the third in late February/early March 1992, and the fourth and final in May 1992. All interviews were prearranged between the researcher and the participant and each lasted between 25 to 60 minutes. All interviews were conducted either before or during the school day and took place in a quiet location whenever possible so that interviews were uninterrupted and free of distraction.

This usually occurred in the participants' respective classrooms. Each interview was semi-structured and was guided by, but not limited to, a series of previously prepared general questions by the researchers (see Appendix D for the guiding questions). These guiding questions were designed to focus rather than limit the discussion. Thus, the interviews remained "open-ended and assumed a conversational manner" (Yin, 1984, p. 89).

All interviews were audiotaped and then transcribed verbatim (see Appendix E for a sample set of four consecutive interviews with Leigh). There were 24 transcripts in total and they were all analyzed inductively. Each set of interview transcripts were colour coded (yellow=interview 1; blue=interview 2; pink=interview 3; green=interview 4). The responses in each transcript were then examined and categorized into groups. A matrix of categories was identified and the evidence from the transcripts was placed within these categories. A visual display of the data was constructed on charts for easy identification of major categories; for each chart, four columns of data were established as a result of the four interviews with each participant. Themes were constructed across the four interviews for each participant. The way in which themes were constructed was based on the evidence found over all four interviews (i.e., it was a "theme" if the issue, concern or dilemma persisted throughout the year and was discussed in all four interviews). This criteria was used because it represented the experiences encountered by each participant that seemed to be immediate and relevant to each of them over the four interviews. Thus, themes were identified based on the frequency of the responses given by the participants. The limitation of these interviews was that the data provided only a snapshot of experiences rather than

details of the whole year's experience. Also, the accuracy of the data was based on the ability of the participant to recall and articulate experiences. At the conclusion of the study, the audiotapes were erased.

The data for each teacher were then written up in a case study format. According to Yin (1984), "a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context...." (p. 23). This format was chosen because the study attempted to provide an opportunity for the participants to tell their own stories about their experiences as first year teachers in an induction program.

In the next chapter, each of these stories is told. Each mini-case description begins with the context of the teaching situation and then identifies the themes of experiences over the four interviews. Each theme summarizes a perceived concern, an aspect of support, or a dilemma encountered. In Chapter five, common themes of experiences amongst all six beginning teachers in the Wellington School District's Beginning Teacher Induction/Mentoring Program are described. In addition, there will be a discussion on the value of the induction program.

Chapter 4

The Teachers

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the results of the data analysis of the six mini-case studies will describe the perceived experiences of each of the six first year teachers in the Wellington School District's Beginning Teacher Induction/Mentoring Program. Preceding each case will be a brief description of the context for that beginning teacher. Then there will be a description of identified themes that emerged from the analysis of the transcripts over the four interviews for each case. As described in Chapter three, a theme was identified if the issue, concern or dilemma persisted throughout the year and was discussed in all four interviews. Identified themes ranged from two to four per case study. The themes were linked to the study's research focus: what are the perceptions of six beginning teachers participating in a District Induction Program about their experiences teaching (e.g. what types of support did they receive in their schools from the program), and what are the beginning teachers' perceptions of the value of the District-wide component of the Induction Program on beginning teachers. In each case study, the beginning teacher provided a glimpse into her experiences: perceived concerns, level of support, and dilemmas encountered.

4.1 Case One: Katey

This case study was based on the first year teaching experiences of Katey. Katey was 26 years old and taught in Tomoguchi Elementary School. This small

elementary school enrolled 200 students and had a teaching staff of eleven. During this first year of teaching, Katey taught a multi-aged class of students ages 7 to 9. She taught the Primary Program [which is one of three Education Programs proposed in British Columbia. In this four year Primary Program, first year is equivalent to Kindergarten, second year is equivalent to grade one, etc.; the other two programs are Intermediate (grades 4-10) and Graduation (grades 11-12)] and therefore her 23 students were in primary years 3/4 (grades 2/3).

Three themes were identified during Katey's first year of teaching which affected her experience as a beginning teacher. These themes were: supportive relationships; loneliness; and stress.

4.1.1 Theme one - supportive relationships

Katey had a very enjoyable first year of teaching and two factors made this possible. She did not experience any classroom management problems and she had a strong supportive relationship with her mentor, Louise.

Katey: I would rate my first year of teaching as an eight. The class that have is the major highlight. It's a wonderful group of kids. It's been a rewarding experience.... I felt very supported by my mentor. She was great. She was just across the hall. I could go to her for anything. She always listened. Whenever I needed resources she would always borrow them from other teachers. (Interview 4)

Katey felt the mentorship concept was a very good one and appreciated the school district for establishing the induction program. Katey was first hired at a bigger school (450 students) but during the second week of September, due to unexpected lower student numbers at that school, she said she was "shuffled" to the smaller school of Tomoguchi Elementary. However, before that shuffle, she had

met up with her first mentor, Alison, who supported Katey during the summer and the first weeks of September.

Katey: The one thing I found that was really helpful was that my mentor teacher got in touch with me in August.... We had already started planning our year together so it was already like I was part of the staff.... I am a new teacher, and you just feel so lost and so alone. It's so nice to have that someone who is there and is from your school.... And with Alison and I, because we were going to be team teaching, we planned quite extensively. (Interview 1)

Changing school was an awful experience for Katey but she chose another mentor, Louise at this second school. Louise was also very supportive and her classroom was across the hall. Katey commented that "we are working alot together... I am teaching grades 2/3 and my mentor is teaching grades 3/4.... Louise and I hit it off right away and we've done some team teaching" (Interview 1).

Thus, despite the different ages of students, Katey and Louise had a group of overlapping grade 3 students. Katey was supported by Louise and together they collaborated in planning activities.

Katey: We share alot of resources. And she's been in to observe me. We've done a cooperative learning activity with both of our classes combined which worked out really well.... We're both doing the theme of spiders right now, so we are always consulting one another. (Interview 1)

Katey felt that if she were to receive any support this year, it would have had to be "more directly from the school and I think I need that kind of support from Louise and the other staff members" (Interview 2). She expressed that she received much support from other staff members, specifically from the other primary teachers. Katey commented, "there's four of us in the primary wing who are here late until 7, 8 or 9 o'clock at night and so we talk alot and discuss what we're going to be doing next day" (Interview 1).

With reference to support from her administrator, during the second interview, Katey expressed some concerns due to his busy schedule.

Katey: He's been in to observe me once so far.... I think the principal has to make a real effort to know what's going on in the classroom because he is so busy and sometimes I can't catch him... I make meetings with him and he's off somewhere else and that happens quite frequently actually and I'm not sure what the solution is.
(Interview 2)

In addition, Katey felt that the administration should be more "sensitive" to the pressures of beginning teachers.

Katey: He's difficult to approach sometimes when I have concerns.... [I am] not getting as much support from my administrator.... I think my mentor teacher was more prepared for dealing with me than both my administrators were. There are pressures that both I and another first year teacher are having. I don't think that they realize or they have forgotten what it's like to be a first year teacher. And they are so busy with their own administrative duties that I think we are sometimes forgotten about. (Interview 3)

Linked to this, arose another concern. It dealt with school behaviour. Apparently, there seemed to be a school-wide problem with, what Katey called, "rowdy" conduct by older students in the hallway and it seemed that nothing was being done. Katey and several primary teachers initiated a staff discussion on the problem.

Katey: I had some concerns with the discipline in the school. There were a couple of other people in the school who also had the same kind of concerns and we formed a committee and went to the administrator and things were changed... it was an awkward thing but we felt that the way things were going at the school, we needed to voice our concerns.... As a first year teacher, I didn't know if I was stepping on toes... I didn't think I was received very well. But anyways, that's the way it goes. I'm trying to make the environment a better place, a safer place for the

kids. (Interview 3)

This concern about school discipline and creating a better environment for students demonstrated Katey's philosophy of care and respect for children. The primary teachers supported her as she brought this to the attention of the other staff members and the administration but as was described, she didn't feel she was well perceived. During the last interview, she expressed how much this problem distressed her, "it's good to go into my room and not be involved in all of this other stuff that's happening in the school. That's the lowpoint [of my first year]" (Interview 4).

4.1.2 Theme two: loneliness

Despite the collaboration Katey experienced with her mentor Louise, there were times she still felt lonely. This concern was expressed several times and mainly resulted from the fact that she was teaching in a small school where there was no other grades 2/3 teacher to specifically co-plan units with.

Katey: It can be lonely sometimes. A very lonely job especially when there's not another 2/3 classroom teacher in the school.... It's hard. I don't have another teacher to talk to and it's my first year. It would be so nice if I were in a school, where I had another teacher who was teaching the same grade level. (Interview 3)

This feeling of loneliness was amplified when her principal was suppose to arrange for her to visit other schools and due to his busy schedule, it didn't happen. In addition, her principal frustrated Katey by forgetting to introduce her to a few school routines. For example,

Katey: Sometimes I do feel abit alone and I'm not too sure where to go for alot of things... I didn't even find out until the last day that we were supposed to fill out the white cards for the attendance. No one explained it to me... there are

some things that I think there could have been a little bit more effort to inform myself and the other beginning teacher about. But it's just because people are so busy. And they assume we know and we don't know.
(Interview 2)

Thus, Katey experienced isolation and loneliness in this small school. Compounding this were her feelings of being safer in her classroom away from all this "other stuff that's happening in the school."

4.1.3 Theme three: stress/burnout

Several times this first year, Katey expressed feelings of being overwhelmed and stressed. She was frustrated in not finding the time to go to the district workshops or to visit other schools. In addition, with all the school-based activities of student-led conferences, report cards, Open House, and frequent late hours of planning, she was becoming drained, tired and stressed.

Katey was concerned about eventual burnout.

Katey: I'm concerned that teachers are worked too hard... I realize that this is my first year but I think there should be more time off. On the professional development days, it's great to have all these workshops. It's important for us to grow and develop as teachers but we need time to work in our classroom too. I don't have enough of that. I stay late every night as it is. I come early and there's still never enough time to do all the things that I want to do. I know it will get better over time. You hear of all those teachers burning out and I don't want to be one of them.
(Interview 3)

Katey's initial perceptions about teaching was that it was going to be a great deal of work but she had no idea it was going to be like this, so overwhelming. Her main concern was that "teaching should not take over your life".

Katey: My perceptions of what the workload was going to be, was way off. I didn't realize it was this much work, but they say that first year teaching is always like that. It's hard. I

get really tired and I try not to let it affect my teaching but I don't have another life right now. Teaching is my whole life. I don't feel resentful but I think if it continued for two or three years like this, I don't know if I would be able to teach five or ten years down the road. I think that I would burn out. (Interview 3)

Furthermore, Katey was surprised by the amount of planning that was required in teaching.

Katey: I didn't realize how difficult and time consuming it would be. I thought I could order materials from the media center but it's not the case at all.... In primary you have to develop your own resources. That's something I learned. (Interview 3)

The multi-aging aspect of the Primary Program also perplexed Katey.

Katey: [I'm finding the grades] 2/3 split to be really difficult to deal with at times, because there is such a range of abilities. As a new teacher it certainly would have been easier to deal with a straight grade...I'm finding the multi-aging very difficult, very challenging... but I'm managing as best I can and I'm trying to be flexible and I'm trying new things all the time. I'll try what works and for what doesn't work, I'll disregard it and try something else. But it's hard. (Interview 2)

Upon reflection, Katey felt that the worst experience this year occurred at the start of the year when she had to change schools.

Katey: The worst part of teaching was having to move from one school to another.... They moved me because of nine students that they needed in the school.... I didn't know what grade I was going to be teaching and where I was going. I felt totally lost...that was a really bad experience for me. (Interview 1)

4.1.4 Summary

Katey survived this first year because of her mature, optimistic, and survival attitude about teaching. In addition, she had confidence in herself to create a positive climate, free of problems, inside her own classroom.

Katey: I think that my expectations are quite high. I set them high for a reason, I think that children will work best when they know what your expectations are. So far they are living up to them. I don't have any management problems in this class. (Interview 1)

Furthermore, she received a great deal of support from her mentor Louise, and from other staff members. These supportive relationships helped Katey overcome the concerns of feeling lonely, stressed, tired, and overworked. After all this, Katey was able to have a good feeling about teaching. In her final interview she emphasized that collaboration was the key to survival.

Katey: I think meeting with other teachers is very important. I've learned that this year.... [For beginning teachers, remember] if something is bothering you, go and talk to someone. Feel free to talk amongst each other. To share ideas. It's so much better. (Interview 4)

4.2 Case Two: Leigh

This case study was based on the first year teaching experiences of Leigh. Leigh was 26 years old and taught at Woodsmith Elementary School. It was a small French Immersion school which enrolled 460 students and had 24 teachers. During this first year of teaching, Leigh taught 26 children ages 5, 6 and 7 participated in the English program of the school. Her students were in years 1/2 (Kindergarten/grade 1) of the new Primary Program. Prior to employment in this district, she substituted for two months in various multi-aged classrooms in two other school districts. In addition, she worked as a children's aid in a mental health clinic and had worked in social services where she gained experience in dealing with parents.

Four themes were identified during Leigh's first year of teaching which affected her experience as a beginning teacher. The themes were: supportive

relationships; stress from dealing with parents; teaching philosophy and "being unaware".

4.2.1 Theme one: supportive relationships

Leigh experienced a very strong beginning teacher/mentor teacher relationship in her first year of teaching. She had two mentor teachers, Sue and Jamie. Their classrooms were very close to Leigh's and were in the primary wing of the school. Sue had taught for ten years and currently taught year 2/3's (grades 1/2) while Jamie was in her second year and currently taught year 3/4's (grades 2/3). Leigh, Sue and Jamie worked together as a team in planning experiences for their students in the new Primary Program. Leigh said, "I have two mentors and they are incredible. Just amazing. I'm working on multi-aging with my mentors. So we actually combine three classes" (Interview 1).

Leigh valued and appreciated these collaborative relationships. Her mentors were very helpful and provided her with emotional support.

Leigh: I mean I can just go and ask them anytime for help.... It's much better... in talking to Sue and Jamie, I get ideas that I hadn't thought of before and sometimes those ideas don't require quite as much work. (Interview 2)

Leigh credited both Jamie and Sue for influencing her teaching practice this year and saw "things that I never thought I could do in grade one working and I think that comes from Sue and Jamie" (Interview 1). Jamie influenced Leigh's math program.

Jamie: We're doing alot of hands-on math. Math is incredible. I love math and I came from a practicum where math was very teacher directed, right out of a textbook, worksheets.... [I spoke to Jamie] and she said "we use scrapbooks. We do all our math in scrapbooks and allow

the kids to draw in their scrapbook or glue or whatever."
(Interview 1)

Leigh felt that Sue had made the most difference in supporting her and explained, "probably because she's had all this experience and she's so calm and wise... she's seen it all and she's seen so many changes. She started with the basal readers and all of that... she's very much in favour of [the new] changes" (Interview 4).

Not only did her mentors share ideas, and plan units with Leigh, they both modelled a successful student-centered approach to learning in their respective classrooms. This approach was not what Leigh had experienced in both her practicum and teacher preparation. Instead of textbook math, they encouraged hands-on math. In addition to this modelling, both mentors encouraged Leigh to have a balanced life and that meant not staying at the school all evening. It meant having a personal life outside of the classroom. Leigh commented, "Sue's a good influence on me that way because we are going to aerobics together so when she says we're leaving at 4:30, we're leaving.... Sue and Jamie try to scare me out of here. I'm here at 7 o'clock [in the morning]" (Interview 2).

In addition to the support from her two mentors, Leigh was also supported by: her husband, who would obtain supplies and make her classroom materials; her teaching buddy, whose grades 4/5's did buddy activities with her K/1's; her girlfriend at another school teaching the same level, who planned with her on several occasion; and her administrators, who arranged regular release time for her and her mentors to plan units. For Leigh, the emotional support from these people made the difference in her surviving this year.

Leigh: The emotional support is great.... That's why I think the

[district induction] mentoring program is so good... you can find the stuff anywhere, like you can go out and buy a book...and get your ideas... but if you don't have that support, it doesn't matter how much materials you have, you are not going to survive.... The teachers in this school are very supportive of one another and they are willing to give you ideas and support... when they pass by and make a comment about your room, that brightens your whole day.... I can get material anywhere. [I] can go and spend [my] money buying stuff, but the people are making the difference! (Interview 2)

4.2.2 Theme two: stress from dealing with parents

A major concern that stressed Leigh the entire year was dealing with parents. In September, Leigh was very frustrated by parents who questioned her abilities because she was a first year teacher.

Leigh: I'm not stressed now [October], but that first month was awful. I had neurotic parents with all their concerns coming. I think alot of parents are concerned about first year teachers and whether or not you're capable.... That first month was a nightmare, because I would never ever dream that anyone would question what I was doing.... I'm left to my little dreamworld and thought...they are going to love me. They are going to know that I am the teacher. Of course they think that I am capable. No one will ever question this.... And what ends up happening is that for some parents, they see you as a first year teacher.... All of a sudden they had these grave concerns.... I had some really crazy parents and we had a whole lynching ceremony but I mean.... I think if I were another person, I probably would not have handled it quite as well.... I potentially could have been packing my suitcase and leaving. (Interview 1)

Leigh attributed many of the parents' concerns to them not understanding the philosophy of the new Primary Program and said "[alot] of parents will come in and say "how come you don't correct their spelling... what do you think you are doing here... how come my kid gets kindergartens in his class?" (Interview 1).

Leigh's advice was to prepare beginning teachers to deal with parents who

were going to ask these questions. She suggested that this preparation could occur at both the university and at the district induction workshops. She said, "I think that you need to prepare teachers and let them know "hey, start thinking about what you're doing and how you are going to answer, without being defensive, before those people come knocking at your door" (Interview 1).

Throughout the year, Leigh managed the dilemma of what her program should look like: should parental expectations influence Leigh's expectations? Parental pressures, her own practicum experiences and teacher training informed her that the "traditional" approach (worksheets, basal readers etc.,) was still evident in the workplace. Her collaboration with her mentors, her observations of her mentors' successful experiences in their respective classrooms, and her own philosophy of learning, influenced what actually occurred in her classroom. Because of Leigh's confidence in herself and her intuition about teaching, her classroom program reflected her best understanding of what she felt would provide the best learning experiences for her students. Leigh's practice reflected the philosophy of the new Primary Program which was a hands-on, child-centered, discovery learning approach.

Leigh: So many parents have the attitude that teaching is running off worksheets and the kids are just sitting there doing these things and it's not the case at all. Then I run into the opposite. I run into parents who say "how come you're not doing math?" and I say "oh we are doing math. The kids just don't realize it because it looks like we're playing". Because we're doing so much hands-on math and there isn't any record of that... there are records but the records are minimal compared to what we used to do. Before we used to have a big huge math workbook...but with the new program, the majority of it is hands-on and there's maybe one or two sheets. (Interview 2)

In general, many of the parents were supportive. One parent, however, was

constantly challenging Leigh's approach and was concerned that her son wasn't getting his "spelling corrected" or "getting math worksheets to complete".

Leigh: It's just that she's very traditional.... She wants to know why we are not drilling kids on how to spell and all those sorts of things.... We had a student led conference and then she and I had another two hour teacher conference... she just couldn't understand why I didn't say anything negative about her son. She basically wanted to know why her son's report card was so great. (Interview 2)

The situation with this parent escalated during the year and continually stressed Leigh.

Leigh: Her child got into a fight with another child and I talked to the parent.... I met the mother with the Learning Assistance teacher...the parent got out of control and slammed her fist onto the table.... I've told her she isn't welcomed in the class now. When she is in the class she is negative to kids and other parents. She makes me nervous. One day she came in and yelled at me in front of the class...then she went out in the hallway to tell other parents about me and that I was tormenting her son. My concern was that I wasn't telling parents about her and I want to have a job next year and I don't want parents to hear those things.... My principal was supportive and gave me an option to report this [incident] to the Board and I chose to report it. I think a lot of first year teachers wouldn't do this. You are scared to death. I even said to him, "am I going to be in trouble? Is there some kind of repercussion?" (Interview 3)

In all of this, Leigh questioned her own conduct and feared the repercussions of her actions. This fear was real. Leigh felt that much of this stress could have been eliminated if there were better communication to parents about the philosophy of the new Primary Program. She hoped that the school could address this communication by inviting parents to attend evening information sessions.

Leigh: Even though the program has been going for two year, there are many people who don't understand the program [and] who hate the program. I don't know how many questions on spelling I have had to answer until I

was blue in the face.... You have to talk to them [parents] continuously and you have to be able to show them that this [program] works. You have to take things out like theme books and say look at the amount of thinking this is for a six year old... never mind the spelling...just look at the quality of the thinking. The spelling will come along. If we attack the kids about their spelling now, that thinking wouldn't be there. (Interview 3)

Leigh felt that the administrators and the teachers should host a forum for these parents to clarify the new program. This would alleviate the stress she encountered throughout the year.

4.2.3 Theme three: teaching philosophy

As described earlier, Leigh's teaching philosophy of how students learn best reflected the philosophy of the new Primary Program. Based on her practicum experiences, university training and observations of her mentors' classrooms, Leigh was able to design her classroom program. She lost "a lot of the structures" (interview 1). She learned from previous experiences and she planned longer units of experiences for her students based on theme books, Math and Science manipulatives, and exploration centers. Leigh commented, "today we did math station for an entire full hour and they (students) just rotated [through] the stations and did all this patterning and it was a hoot compared to if I had given them a MathQuest workbook page and said "now colour this square one". That was incredible!" (Interview 1).

Upon reflection, Leigh was so excited about the math discovery boxes her mentors used, that she decided to make science discovery boxes during the summer. Her perception of learning math and science had changed. Now "science and math have been the most exciting for me. I hated math and science in school" (Interview

4).

Leigh was a very optimistic person and believed in the abilities of her students.

Leigh: My kids are amazing.... We did this whole indepth study on spiders... they must have worked an hour and a half...they were so involved. I was just standing there going "I'm keeping these kids next year".... I'm just so impressed. I just was standing there saying "I love these kids". They're so incredible. (Interview 4)

Leigh's philosophy of making learning fun was evident throughout all her activities from language arts theme books to math and science hands-on activities. Leigh commented that "the most important thing is that if your kids are having fun and they enjoy coming to school, then you are doing an excellent job" (Interview 4).

She believed in challenging each child and ensuring that each took responsibility for his or her own learning.

Leigh: You have to give the kids the benefit of the doubt that they are capable of doing these things... you have to adjust your expectations [accordingly]. My dual entry kids that can't handle the writing, they can still do the thinking in their theme books. My ESL kids who don't have a clue of what we are doing can still do parts of what's going on.... My philosophy is that children need to get responsibility for their own learning.... I think it's hard for the kids at first if they are not use to that but they do develop that responsibility and they carry their learning even further than I could because they know where they want to go. You [just] put the activities out...and they [will] explore them. (Interview 3)

Leigh also believed that students should always be getting surprises and new challenges throughout the year. This belief was reflected in how she viewed the use of journals and dictionaries.

Leigh: In the beginning I wanted to do it all at once. I chopped up all the books for the learning logs. They are all ready to go but once I started seeing the kids, I thought "oh there's no

way they can do this. They are going to be so overwhelmed".... They are just trying to get into the routines.... I've got dictionaries for them in the cupboards. Well that will be a surprise in January and then the learning logs will be a surprise [later]. There's always something that has to be exciting for them. If it's all at once, then it's overwhelming and it loses the thrill. I've learn this the hard way because I think I'll just go crazy if I try to do all this. (Interview 2)

Leigh's philosophy of making learning fun and her survival attitude in that "everyday doesn't have to be exhilarating... that you can have matter-of-fact days" (Interview 2) eased the pressure and contributed to her success in her first year.

4.2.4 Theme four: "not knowing"

Leigh was able to identify several concerns which related specifically to beginning teachers because of their "lack of knowing". These concerns plagued all teachers but they are especially magnified for first year teachers. The first area of concern was the teacher preparation program. As described earlier, Leigh felt that her problems of dealing with parents about the Primary Program would have been handled more effectively if she had been warned about the possible confrontations with parents during her university preparation. In addition, she felt insecure about reporting the incident to the School Board because she was a new teacher and didn't want to lose her job if she were perceived as being negligent. She was unaware of district policy and individual rights. As described by Leigh, all beginning teachers were already intimidated by the fact they had no teaching experience and thus hadn't proven themselves to the parents or the kids. It seemed that unless you had confidence in yourself and a support system, as a beginning teacher you would always be doubting your professional decisions.

Leigh: Tell [beginning teachers] about parents. This is not done at the [university]. That has to be done. Public relations is important. One of these days you are going to get someone who comes into your class and screams at you. Inches from your face. What are you going to do? You have to know how to deal with that. (Interview 3)

Leigh was also concern that teacher preparation programs did not emphasize the need for students to discover ideas through "play".

Leigh: A lot of things that you learned at the university... [you] have to let go of. The teacher could be dynamic, amazing and incredible but you have to give the kids a chance to do [things]... they are going to learn so much more doing it on their own. Let them discover what is happening. Invariably they are better than I am. (Interview 1)

Leigh was concern that at the university, you were not encouraged to challenge students' thinking through long-term units of activities.

Leigh: [University] doesn't tell you about theme books.... I am just amazed at what kids can do and they really do us a disservice at the [university] by not telling us to stretch the kids. [They say] "you are parenting. You are trying to survive. Just blast them with bears and then move onto something else" and this has absolutely no relevance. This is the wrong advice.... You have to challenge kids. You have to give them information. They are going to tell you when they can't handle it. (Interview 3)

In addition, Leigh had some fears of her administrator and her experienced mentor teachers. Theses fears were heightened by the fact that she was a first year teacher.

Leigh: I think in the beginning, at least in my case, "oh now the principal's here". I'm sweating already just as he's walking in the room.... I think I couldn't have started working with Sue and Jamie right in September. I would have felt safer to get away because what they are doing is incredible multi-aging and I'm trying to figure out what are we going to do tomorrow in math. I'm in a totally different plane. (Interview 1)

Leigh also expressed a concern about the lack of supplies and materials for

math and science. Leigh made many of her math materials at home. This created a dilemma for Leigh: if you don't have the supplies, do you go without and therefore not do the activity; or do you spend your own money and buy them; or do you make the materials you need?

Leigh: I need materials.... Science is so incredibly important and it is really frustrating to try to run a science program when you don't have any materials.... I don't mind supplying things but it gets to the point where you start getting frustrated... you want to do something but that material isn't there. So do you go and buy it or do you modify it or what do you do? Or do they go without? Sue has made alot of stuff so she's been lending me her stuff... eventually I'll have to make those things which is just another thing ontop of everything else that you are making. It gets to be a bit much. (Interview 2)

Two additional concerns related to this theme of "being unaware" were school routines and allocation of supplies. Leigh did not get a tour of the school and was unaware of all the school's routines and procedures. No one had taken the time to orient her. This resulted in her being unaware that there was a sign-in book for teacher attendance. In addition, she had no idea about the supplies and how much was allocated to each teacher. For example, "I only got 15 gluesticks at the beginning of the year and I thought that was my year's supply" (Interview 3). When she told her mentor, Sue laughed. Finally, as a result of being an "unaware" beginning teacher, and not being in a position to question what actually happened at the school, Leigh was taken advantage of.

Leigh: You are the only one going "you mean I shouldn't be volunteering to have my prep time on Monday and Friday.... You know how many preps I missed [due to holidays and school proD days. What an interesting coincidence. Both my girlfriend and I are first year teachers and we both have Monday and Friday preps. The prep people suggest it to you and you say "oh isn't that nice" [not knowing that you're being taken advantage of].

(Interview 3)

These concerns related to inadequate university preparation (dealing with parents, planning challenging experiences for kids), fear of colleagues, lack of supplies, inadequate orientation to the school's routines and decision-making process, were all part of the "not knowing" phenomenon experienced by many first year teachers.

4.2.5 Summary

This first year of teaching was a very positive experience for Leigh. Her confidence in herself as a teacher and the support she received from her mentors and other staff members provided Leigh with the strength to deal with parental concerns and other problems that beginning teachers encounter. Leigh's teaching philosophy reflected her belief in kids and thus she planned her experiences so that students of all abilities could be challenged and successful. Her survival attitude and her belief in leading a "balanced life" influenced her perception of her first year of teaching as a tremendous success.

Leigh: Everything was a highlight this year. [My advice for beginning teachers would be] just relax. don't worry about things... it doesn't matter.... You have to stop pressuring yourself.... We are capable. The district would not have hired us if we weren't capable.... First year teachers have to get out of the classroom.... Do some exercise.... (Interview 4)

4.3 Case Three: Margaret

This case study was based on the first year teaching experiences of Margaret. Margaret was 42 years old and taught at Scarborough Elementary School. It was a small elementary school which enrolled 100 students. During this first year of

teaching, Margaret taught 20 children ages 6 and 7. They were in years 2/3 (grades 1/2) of the new Primary Program. Margaret shared this teaching assignment with her teaching partner Patty. Margaret was first hired to the district in January and had worked at Whalley Elementary before coming to Scarborough Elementary. At Scarborough Elementary there were five new teachers out of a staff of nine.

Four themes were identified during Margaret's first year of teaching which affected her experiences as a beginning teacher. The themes were: supportive relationships; job sharing; dealing with diversity; and stress.

4.3.1 Theme one: supportive relationships

Margaret had previously experienced working collaboratively with a buddy teacher at Whalley Elementary school. That collaboration started in January and thus for Margaret collaboration amongst teachers was the norm. Margaret developed many supportive relationships at Scarborough Elementary but the two most significant ones were with her teaching partner Patty, and her buddy teacher Mark.

Patty's relationship with Margaret "was probably the best introduction to teaching that I personally could have... I've been really, really lucky" (Interview 4).

Margaret: I am using my teaching partner as my mentor mostly. Even though we don't work together at the same time. We do our planning. We're talking. It works well because we both know the kids intimately and that's really great. (Interview 3)

Margaret's buddy teacher was also the vice-principal and the physical education relief teacher. Margaret valued this supportive relationship because she found Mark to be "a continual source of energy and he's always happy [and]

positive" (Interview 3). In addition, "Mark was always supportive. Mark and I have a buddy reading program.... Mark is very experienced and he knows what he's doing" (Interview 4).

Margaret was also assigned a mentor teacher Maria. They didn't meet very often. Maria's classroom was down the hall and she taught grades 3/4. These factors prohibited the formation of a close collaborative relationship between Margaret and Maria.

Margaret appreciated the opportunities to collaborate with teachers whether they were with Mark, Patty, the ESL resource teacher, the classroom assistant or members of the district resource team. Margaret expressed, "having a friend on staff is really important. Having an experienced teacher there who is willing to guide you [is important].... Most teachers would go out of their way to help you" (Interview 3).

4.3.2 Theme two: job sharing

Job sharing created a dilemma for Margaret. How much effort was enough when you only worked half-time? Margaret expressed, "I'm doing the best I can. I find that it would be easier were I here all the time but when you are only here two or three days a week, then you sort of do what you can on those days" (Interview 2).

In addition, she felt that as a half-time teacher you "don't get a clear idea of the workings of the school" (Interview 2). At times she wished she could teach full-time so she could plan all the learning experiences her way and have control of her class. At other times, she was glad that she was half-time because she was also a mother of two children. Also, she was frustrated by the diversity (due to

mainstreamed students) in her classroom.

Margaret: One thing that has a big bearing on my teaching situation is that I only work half-time. I'm job sharing. With this class being so needy, it would be very difficult if not impossible... to do it full-time. My partner is an experienced teacher. She's been teaching for 15 years and she would never do it full-time with this bunch of kids. (Interview 3)

Although Patty was her teaching partner and together they planned the program of experiences for the kids, Margaret had difficulties with Patty's approach to teaching. Another dilemma arose regarding which approach to teaching was more effective for learning? Math worksheets and basal readers or child-centered hands-on learning? Patty preferred the worksheets and basal readers approach while Margaret preferred the hands-on, discovery approach. This frustrated Margaret because "our programs are not the same...I don't want to do worksheets. Patty wants to do worksheets" (Interview 1). Margaret added, "my partner is doing the MathQuest and so I let them do that sometimes.... I'd rather do the concrete things because a lot of them need it..." (Interview 2).

In term one, parent conferences were held because Patty knew these parents from last year and this was the approach used to discuss each child's progress. Margaret participated as an observer while Patty conducted each parent conference. For term two, Margaret hoped that student-led conferences would be employed. In this approach, the teacher's role was quite different.

Margaret: I will have to talk to Patty on that. What I see our role as, is as a facilitator. I see the kids bringing their parents in and introducing them to us in the classroom... but I'm afraid it may not actually work out the way that I have planned. That's the problem with working with partners. (Interview 2)

In addition to the different philosophies of teaching, job sharing also caused

Margaret to miss out on district workshops. On days that she wasn't working, if she wanted to attend the workshops, she would have to hire a baby sitter. Margaret felt left out of these opportunities and was concerned that she was missing some important learning opportunities.

4.3.3 Theme three: dealing with diversity

Dealing with, what Margaret described as, the "needy" children in the classroom was a constant source of frustration for both Margaret and Patty. Margaret perceived this class to be "a difficult class. It has a lot of diversity" (Interview 2). Of the twenty students in the class, three were identified as special needs (one cerebral palsy, one mentally retarded, one autistic tendencies) and six were ESL students. In addition, Margaret explained that "half the class was receiving learning assistance" (Interview 2).

Margaret: It's an ethnic group. Most are East Indians and then the White people who are here are really poor.... We've been worrying about our special needs kids. Trying to give the abled kids some good learning... that's been the hardest thing. (Interview 3)

There were many personnel assigned to support this class of students but their presence created a dilemma for Margaret. Support for the diversity in the class was needed but how much support does it take and how many people should be involved? How do you coordinate and cope with all these resource people coming in and out of your classroom?

Initially she felt like "they just come in and are watching me. They come in at inopportune times and just sit there" (Interview 1). Then she became overwhelmed and didn't know how to cope with all these resource people.

Margaret: We counted them up and there are 11 adults who come in and out of this room weekly. That's a lot.... The counsellor will come in and hang out with some kids. This is good news and bad news. We don't like disruptions. We don't like alot of people coming in and out. We don't want to have open house. On the one hand, you would like to have support [and on the other hand this creates alot of disruptions] (Interview 3).

Margaret felt that her concerns were influenced by her inexperience as a teacher.

Margaret: With all this diversity, the less people who are in here the better it is.... I don't know how the support people can help me. I'm not experienced enough. I don't know what I'm suppose to do. I don't know what they are suppose to do. The counsellor walks into the room. There's alot of kids pulling at me and all this kind of stuff and I say, "oh hi" and she'll say something like, "oh I would like to look at..." and I would say, "oh go ahead...." (Interview 2)

This dilemma persisted for the whole year and frustrated both Margaret and Patty. It also enhanced Margaret's feelings of being overwhelmed and helpless.

4.3.4 Theme four: stress/burnout

Margaret was working half-time. She had a class of "needy" kids. She did not have enough time to plan a good program with her teaching partner. She didn't know how to cope with all these resource people. Her teaching partner's teaching philosophy contrasted hers. All of these factors caused alot of stress for Margaret. She didn't have the time to reflect on her teaching and to catch up. Margaret stated, "beginning teachers need time. I come as early as I can. I have to run away from home before anybody gets up. I'm in the school by 7 o'clock" (Interview 2).

In addtion, Margaret had a young family at home.

Margaret: I have the kids at home... Although I think it's important

to have children. It's very difficult to have young children when you are a beginning teacher. (Interview 2)

Upon reflection during the final interview, Margaret summarized her concerns about the lack of time and burnout, and said, "life is going by too fast. And it shouldn't because this will cause burnout. Unless that stops, you're going to crash at the end" (Interview 4).

Her advice for beginning teachers reflected her survival attitude during her own first year as a teacher.

Margaret: You can't do everything all at once so you do everything one at a time. Begin at the beginning and just do what you can. That's it.... Remember, it's okay.... Whatever you do, it'll be okay. It's so easy to get caught up. Use your mentor teacher. Don't isolate yourself. Get close [to people] and don't be afraid to ask [for help]. (Interview 4)

4.3.5 Summary

Margaret rated her first year of teaching as a seven (out of a maximum of ten where ten represented excellent) and explained that she was just starting to experience some successes with her students. Despite all the problems she was encountering around job sharing, dealing with a lack of time, and dealing with diversity, Margaret survived her year because of her positive survival attitude. She established many supportive relationships amongst staff members but her main support came from her teaching partner Patty, and buddy teacher Mark.

Margaret emphasized the need to develop collaborative relationships when she expressed, "I think that the mentoring program, if it does nothing else, is good because it gives time for a beginning teacher to make a friend on staff and to make a close connection and that is really important. It's really good" (Interview 2).

4.4 Case Four: Sue

This case study was based on the first year teaching experiences of Sue. Sue was 24 years old and taught at Tomoguchi Elementary School, like Katey in case one. During this first year of teaching, Sue taught Kindergarten in the morning and was the ESL/LA [English as a Second Language/Learning Assistance] resource teacher in the afternoon. Her Kindergarten class consisted of 18 students and her afternoon case load consisted of 20 students. As the LA resource teacher she worked with students in grades six and seven and, as the ESL resource teacher she worked with students from the entire school grades two to seven. In total Sue worked with 38 students.

Two themes were identified during Sue's first year of teaching which affected her experiences as a beginning teacher. These themes were problems which arose from her teaching misassignment and were identified as a lack of support and stress.

The problems that Sue encountered in her first year of teaching were rooted in her lack of preparation to teach the assignments given to her. She was misassigned. She was not prepared to teach Kindergarten and learning assistance. Sue received teacher preparation for upper primary grades and during her first two practica, she taught in grades 3/4 and grades 6/7. Her long thirteen week practicum was in grade 3. In addition, Sue taught ESL in an independent school for a short time before being hired to the Wellington School District.

When Sue was first hired to the District she was offered a position to teach half-time as a LA resource teacher. This was an area where she had no teacher preparation in. This offer created a dilemma for Sue. Should she accept the position and teach outside of her area of expertise, as Sue said, "to get the job", or

should she wait for a more appropriate job offer and risk not getting a job? Sue made the decision to accept the offer based on her desire to "get into the [district]" and on the premise that "if I could survive a year, I can find a better position next year" (Interview 3). Also at this time, she had no idea what the other half-time teaching load was going to be.

Sue: When I was first interviewed, I was interviewed for this position [Kindergarten class].... Peter (the principal), really liked me but he couldn't give this job to me because he had to give it to this other teacher. But he said he really wanted me on staff so he would give me the next position that came up.... I was trained as an upper primary [and had experience in Intermediate] which made me really surprised that I was interviewed for Kindergarten. Kindergarten is something I'm not prepared for.... The LA position came up of which I had no experience whatsoever...I haven't taken any courses...I took the position and they said they would find me another 0.5 position somewhere in the district. And that's all I knew for the whole summer. And when September came around I was here.... Suddenly we got this influx of ESL students...so they decided to make my position half LA and half ESL...I have taught ESL before.... And then I got changed again because of the [low] numbers.... [I was offered the Kindergarten class].... I was really hesitant in taking this position. Thinking back now, it would have been smarter to keep with just the two (LA and ESL).... (Interview 3)

Thus, initially Sue accepted the half-time LA position and then later on she also accepted the half-time Kindergarten position. Both were misassignments because she had no previous experience in these areas. At the time Sue attended the summer institute component of the Wellington School District Beginning Teacher Induction/Mentoring Program, she was only confirmed to teach half-time LA. This created frustration for her as she participated in the summer workshop. Sue expressed, "I found it [information] really useful but unfortunately I didn't know what type of class I would have or grade level and in terms of that it was very difficult to concentrate or focus (on the information being discussed)..." (Interview

1).

As a result of her LA position, when Sue had the opportunity to choose a mentor during the first week of school, she chose the LA resource teacher Mavis, and asked for a common preparation period with her. This situation worked out very well and Sue and Mavis started planning their respective school programs (Mavis with grades 1-5 and Sue with grades 6-7). Then when the reorganization took place, Sue lost the common preparation period with Mavis.

4.4.1 Theme one: lack of support

It was only in the first three weeks of September that Sue experienced any form of support; this was from Mavis. They shared the learning assistance resource center. From Mavis, Sue learned a great deal about being a Learning Assistance resource teacher.

Sue: Mavis works only Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and half day Thursdays and she leaves early because of her [position at another school] so I seem to talk to her three or four times a day.... She showed me all the materials in the LA room and how to schedule IEP's [individual education plan]. [She showed me] everything that she had and [showed me] what she did for the program.... We haven't set any times for me to watch her and I think it's because we are working with two very different age groups. She's working with the primary and I'm working with the intermediate, and it's quite difficult especially when we are still short of time and there's so many kids in need that we just don't think to take the time to watch each other. (Interview 1)

Once the school reorganized the teaching loads, due to declining enrolment, Sue lost her personal support system. This was when the problems began.

Sue: Since the timetable changes, we are having a bit of difficulty because I don't see her (Mavis) as often. She's really here in the mornings [when I have my Kindergarten class].... Lunch hours are usually meetings and she doesn't get here before nine thirty

and she leaves at two thirty so we kind of miss each other.... I guess I should've chosen two mentors.... It's easier too if you are in the same school. (Interview 2)

Consequently, Sue had very few opportunities to collaborate with her mentor. Her request for two, possibly three, mentors was quite reasonable since Sue now also taught Kindergarten and was responsible for the school's ESL student population. As a result, Sue sought support from other primary teachers in the same wing of the school or friends who she went to the university with.

Another factor that made Sue's situation so frustrating was that in this small school, there was no other Kindergarten teacher. The previous Kindergarten teacher was no longer teaching at the school. Thus, Sue wanted to visit Kindergarten programs at other schools. Due to a lack of time, she was unable to do this.

Sue: Especially in this Kindergarten position... there's no one else here who is teaching Kindergarten. I had chosen a mentor already because my initial assignment was LA but then it changed. Now I know that I should have chosen a Kindergarten mentor but there wasn't one... because we are a small school, we only have one Kindergarten class. (Interview 3)

The administration was perceived by Sue to be unsupportive. The principal had observed her and told her she was doing well but he failed to provide her with "emotional support" and "planning advice". In addition, he had volunteered to organize her visitations to observe other Kindergarten programs but due to his busy schedule, this never occurred.

4.4.2 Theme two: stress

Due to her misassignment and the reorganization of the timetable, Sue was stressed for the entire year. She never felt in control of her Kindergarten class nor

her ESL and LA programs. She was dealing with all these problems on her own. She felt lonely and overwhelmed in this small school. Since the reorganization, Sue felt like she was always trying to catch up. Because she never taught Kindergarten before, she was always uncertain about the activities she was preparing. She made up for her inexperience by working very long days.

Sue: I'm the type of person who likes to be prepared...I find it really difficult... I'm finding myself still trying to catch up to doing these things that really needed to be done at the beginning of the year...I'm still trying to change things. I'm never satisfied with my dayplan.... You get one week behind and then you are always one week behind.... And then you had to quickly get your previews done and then by that time you have to get your evaluations in and you have to arrange your classroom.... I just stay at this school so late, like constantly, and right now [October], I'm starting to leave around 8 or 9 at night instead of 10 [as in September]. It's all that catching up. You never really catch up. (Interview 1)

In addition, and as a another result of being in a small school, Sue had to attend district workshops on the Primary Program, ESL and LA. This compounded her feelings of being overwhelmed, tired and stressed. As a result, these absences took their toll on her students and her programs.

Sue: I've been going to so many workshops that they've [administrators] been signing me up for [workshops in] Kindergarten, LA and ESL and when you are covering three different areas, you have to go to these workshops. And I think I've had five or six substitutes in my classroom already and you just don't have that time to catch up. (Interview 1)

These absences occurred during the first two months of the school year. In combination with the "trying to catch up" feelings experienced with the reorganization, Sue was experiencing a lot of concerns about all the activities around the school like open house, parent conferences and report cards. She said, "I think it's actually taking over my entire life.... I knew [teaching] would be [hard

work] but it's just more than what I had expected...and it's also report card time..." (Interview 3).

In addition to being affected emotionally and psychologically by all this stress, she was also experiencing physical health problems. She had a cold that lasted for three weeks during term two.

After Christmas, Sue experienced a great deal of personal stress which involved a lack of communication between herself, her principal and a dissatisfied parent. Because she was uninformed of the parent's complaints until three months after the incident, Sue felt both helpless and unsupported by the administrator because of his lack of communication with her about the incident.

Sue: I feel that I am going through a crisis. The thing is that I didn't realize some of these things because I wasn't told about them and I felt like I should have been. I guess the administrator hasn't been communicating with me.... It actually happened before Christmas and I wasn't notified about it [by either the parent or the principal]. I finally found out about it two days ago [three months after].... I could have been told that someone had come in to see him and talked about the classroom. The fact that I didn't know makes me look like an idiot. It shouldn't have happened.... The administrator realized this and is very apologetic and he said I should be moving on and should try to get over this but I don't see the support coming through unfortunately. (Interview 3)

The parent's complaints were related to the Primary Program because she felt that Sue wasn't "doing enough math worksheets and writing" in her Kindergarten class but rather she had her students' do, what Sue called, "play" at centers. It appeared to Sue that the principal should have supported her in explaining the Primary Program's philosophy to the parents. For Sue this again illustrated the principal's lack of support for her. Once again, Sue felt that clear communication about the philosophy of the Primary Program should be made to parents of primary-

aged students.

Sue: I had to explain my program a lot and I don't think we really had anyone here to explain the Primary Program to new parents who aren't familiar with it. It is very different from when they went to school.... I should have thought of that myself but I think that's the job of the whole school to do that. (Interview 4)

4.4.3 Summary

For Sue, this was a very difficult first year of teaching. Because of her decision to work in this School District, she agreed to teach in two areas that she had no preparation in. This misassignment created many problems for her and these problems plagued her for the entire year. Initially when Sue was teaching only Learning Assistance, she selected the LA resource teacher to be her mentor. Three weeks into the school year, there was a reorganization of the timetable and Sue agreed to teach a Kindergarten class and to be the ESL resource teacher for the school. Her mentor could no longer support her effectively. Lacking support and working in isolation in this small school created many problems for Sue. She felt overwhelmed, tired, stressed, alone and unsure. In addition, when her principal failed to support her during parental complaints about her Primary Program and didn't arrange for visitations to other schools, Sue became more discouraged.

Sue survived her first year because she believed in her own teaching abilities due to her successful practicum experiences. In addition, she was motivated to succeed because she believed that although it was a misassignment, it was a way to get into the district and "if I could survive a year, I can find a better position next year" (Interview 3).

4.5 Case Five: Susan

This case study was based on the first year teaching experiences of Susan. Susan was 29 years old and taught at Burlington Junior Secondary School which enrolled 880 students. During this first year of teaching, Susan was part of the school's grade eight team. On this team, she taught Humanities 8 to three groups of students. In this course, she taught the same group of students English and Social Studies. She had a teaching partner who saw the same group of students but he taught them Mathematics and Science. In addition, Susan taught one section of Business Education 10. Thus, she taught a total of 120 students in her four courses.

Three themes were identified during Susan's first year of teaching which affected her experiences as a beginning teacher. The themes were: supportive relationships; classroom management; and stress.

5.5.1 Theme one - supportive relationships

Throughout this entire first year of teaching Susan emphasized her need for continuous emotional support. Her strongest relationship was with her mentor, Leanne, a second year teacher who also taught the Business Education 10 course. Leanne's classroom was next door to Susan's classroom. Susan valued this relationship tremendously for it made the difference to her survival. At Burlington Junior Secondary, both Susan and Leanne were part of their school-based induction study group. This group consisted of five first year teachers and five second year teachers who acted as mentors. They met every two second Thursday afterschool at 3 o'clock.

Susan: The mentors tended to be (second) year teachers... which is nice because they have just been through all the first

year hell kind of things and so they know right where you are at and where you are coming from.... (Interview 1)

Susan appreciated the relationship she had with Leanne. As she said, Leanne was her "personal" mentor and she was "great".

Susan: I will go to her mainly for moral support and she gives that to me and she's very good about it. She goes "yeah, I know exactly how it is. It'll probably get better at Christmas".... Well I think the biggest thing is just that you feel that you are really supported... the warm fuzzy feelings [are necessary] because you are just so unsure of yourself. That is, I felt quite unsure and I just needed that moral support because you know that deep down you can do it. (Interview 1)

When Susan encountered difficulties planning Business Education 10, she consulted Leanne. Susan really valued the collaboration aspect of their relationship and appreciated the district induction workshop on "ways of working together: coplan-coteach-coprocess".

Susan: [Leanne and I] teach one class that is common so we've been doing some coplanning on that and actually that was something I picked up too out of the [district] induction program. Just the real emphasis on planning together and saving your time.... Two heads are better than one. It all makes total sense.... but again, it's hardest just to find the time.... I could just go to her and say "oh man, what am I going to do?"

Leanne: Okay, here look. This is what I was thinking. What about you and.... I'm thinking of doing this. What do you think? We really work well together.... We should do this more.

Susan: We seem to work well.... She has a good skeleton of what she thinks she can do and I found I am able to add on some really good activities to it, so in fact that's how we seem to work. (Interview 1)

Susan continued throughout the year to depend on Leanne for her emotional support.

Susan: I need less and less [collaborative] support but I think I still

need emotional support. People like me and I like them.... That's nice...[and if things don't go well] it's not the end of the world. Tomorrow will be a better day. It's kind of supportive with other people being there... I like people to help each other out. (Interview 3)

Susan's second most supportive relationship was with her teaching partner Bob. He taught the same students as Susan. This ongoing relationship was very good for Susan because he would just "drop in to check in" on her and say "how's it going..." (Interview 3). In addition, she could also talk to him about specific students' classroom behaviour or work habits. For example, Susan would ask him "do you have the same problem with this kid? How do you handle it?" (Interview 1).

Susan really valued and respected this relationship with Bob. Bob provided a strong role model for Susan.

Susan: My teaching partner was good. He was checking in on me to see how I was doing. I could get his years of experience. He set up a lot of the expectations at the beginning. So I was able to follow him. I would say that is a really good way to learn. It's like cooperative learning, putting the weaker and the stronger kids together. I felt that this year, I was able to lean towards Bob. I could go to Bob to talk about the kids. He knows the kids because he has already dealt with them. He's good at what he does. (Interview 4)

Susan trusted the relationships with both her mentor and teaching partner. They provided her with the confidence and support to deal with the situations she encountered. In addition to these two supportive relationships, Susan received support from the administration and other teachers. From her administrators, she got immediate assistance in dealing with classroom discipline problems and from the women on staff she always received emotional support especially during times of high stress. However, she was always quite cautious and uncertain about these additional relationships. A dilemma developed. Susan seemed to worry that

"getting help from others" might be perceived as being inadequate. She worried about other teachers' perception of her as a professional. Thus, Susan was caught: should she ask for support or should she go it alone? Asking for support would demonstrate inadequacy and yet going it alone would mean high anxiety. Susan said, "as a beginning teacher, as long as you don't feel threatened, they (other teachers) are going to think that you are dumb or they think that I don't know what I am doing or how on earth did she pass that teacher program.... I can see where you could feel inadequate" (Interview 3).

In addition, Susan felt that some teachers were just not showing their true self.

Susan: You see other people who may outwardly appear to have it more together but then if you talk to them more on a personal level, they're scrambling just as much and yet to the administration, they seem much more "oh no problem".... You know that guys just may tend to cover up more, and it looks like maybe I'm less capable. When in fact, I feel I'm probably doing equally well in the job. (Interview 3)

Susan's relationship with the administration was one of caution too. Initially she was intimidated by them and did not want to discuss classroom situations with them if they were nearby.

Susan: I felt a little intimidated.... You don't want to say "oh my God, I really screwed up that class, and I felt like an idiot".... I guess you're not quite free to say what you want to say because they may overhear you.... You won't say anything with your big boss sitting there. (Interview 1)

When Susan had to elicit the administrators' support in dealing with discipline problems, she always felt supported by their immediate actions of "suspending the student" or "removing them from the class" but she always felt inadequate in not dealing with it on her own. Susan said, "so I went to tell Maria

(vice-principal) and I burst out crying. It was very awful. It was very personal.... So then I feel really stupid because I'm bawling my head off.... Dexter (the principal) knows about it. Everybody knows about these things" (Interview 2).

In her final interview, Susan summed up her experiences about teaching and her thoughts on emotional support.

Susan: I think I was fairly aware of what is involved [in teaching]. I realized it was a lot of work. I probably didn't realize how emotional it could be because you are constantly dealing with people. It's interpersonal relationships.... Those things are very wearing on you. (Interview 4)

4.5.2 Theme two: classroom management

Susan's perception of classroom management problem was that it was linked to her being a first year teacher. She tried to establish a friendly classroom tone and set high expectations for her students but she realized that sometimes that didn't work. However, it seemed that many of her discipline situations involved a few specific individuals who challenged her authority and were attacking her personally. She felt that students "don't get along with you and especially when you are a beginning teacher" (Interview 4).

Susan: I know that one or two [students] can in fact make your class pretty hellish. I think it can make or break some teachers in their first year.... And you know, they can tell who's the weakest teacher. Who are they going to pick on this year and inevitably, it would be a first year. Even if they don't exactly know.... They can tell through the inexperience.... (Interview 2)

Specifically, Susan described an incident where she felt she was being personally attacked. She realized that she should have dealt with the situation earlier instead of allowing it to escalate.

Susan: I've been having a major personality conflict with one of the darling little children in my grade 10 class... he's very manipulative...anyways, he's been very hostile and has a follower who is a nice boy.... So between the two of them, they were disrupting the entire class everyday and personally attacking me... it was very difficult to deal with and I should have dealt with it better earlier but because I didn't, it got worse and worst.... Two days ago, it was just the last straw. They were arguing with me very loudly "why are you.... You are not being fair".... I was shaking. I thought I was going to lose it in the class because I just felt so attacked. (Interview 2)

At times, Susan felt that her inconsistency in following through with her rules aggravated the situation, and said, "like I wouldn't follow through. Like I would talk about them (rules) and would let them slide. That was a big mistake in some of the classes. Because it took longer to get them under control" (Interview 4).

Despite the discipline problems, Susan felt that her expectations of student performance helped to establish a good relationship with most of her students.

Susan: I find that because of my expectations, in class they do get involved instead of sitting back.... The kids respond to me and I feel that I am a fairly firm teacher and I have quite high expectations of the kids both behaviour-wise and academic-wise. I expect them to do their best. I think they respect that.... I find that very positive and rewarding when the kids are very personal. They talk to you and they tell you stuff. They are very excited to see you when you are in the hall. (Interview 4)

Once again, when it came to getting support on classroom management matters, Susan hesitated in getting school support because of the dilemma discussed earlier about "getting support and being perceived as being inadequate". Instead she felt very comfortable with looking for support outside the school from two district teacher consultants Sue and Dan. She met them at the District induction workshops and had developed a good relationship with them. Thus, she felt she could invite them in to help her develop better classroom management skills. In addition, Sue

and Dan worked on a regular basis with the members of the school-based induction program.

Susan: You almost need someone like your mentor or Sue and Dan to come in to give more feedback [on classroom management techniques].... An outside person is better. You don't want to feel stupid in front of your mentor, in front of your administrators or another teacher. (Interview 3)

In the final interview, her advice to beginning teachers was "be really tough. Especially with the rules in the beginning.... The toughest part of the first term is to try to decide on whether to be mean or too nice.... [Also] take care of the problem earlier [before it escalates]" (Interview 4).

4.5.3 Theme three: stress/burnout

Throughout the entire year, Susan felt overwhelmed, tired and stressed. She looked forward to Christmas and Spring breaks, and weekends. Those breaks gave her a chance to relax and put her experiences into perspective. This attitude of reflecting back and knowing that this was only her first year of teaching helped Susan survive the year. Through all of this, she kept a view towards being balanced. Susan said, "you have to find a balance. You have to be able to make time for yourself like and maybe give more concrete things to yourself" (Interview 1).

For Susan, the breaks from school provided her with a rest from the job.

Susan: Christmas break was very nice, restful and relaxing. And when I came back things are just falling into place.... Suddenly the urgency is not there. You seem to know what you are doing.... I think that finally my whole body and brain had a chance to calm right down. I was finding that the stress level was getting lower and lower as I was getting more control.... I think you have to have those weekends. There's really something about them. The whole calming effect of a weekend. It is not dealing with

school. You cannot be expected to work seven days a week.... It's stupid. (Interview 3)

These feelings of being stressed started very early in the year. She felt like she was "swimming in a mountain of handouts" (Interview 1) and attending too many meetings. Susan commented, "I found, especially in September, that every day I had two to three meetings...I was just getting totally burnt out...that is part of the reason why you can't get other things done...like your teaching stuff, like your planning or the marking" (Interview 1). Her advice to beginning teachers was "don't go to meetings from September to December" (Interview 4).

Susan experienced another dilemma. She valued the information she was receiving from workshops, but it was just "too much too soon". She needed to find some quiet time to think, plan, and mark. After all, did she need more information? She just "got out of [teacher preparation] where we have lots of ideas" (Interview 2).

Susan: I find that as a first year, I almost don't want, don't need at this point new ideas, or new information... it's just time for doing the regular stuff and let's get the regular classroom management and the regular planning done.... I think it really is a survival year and I don't really think it's the time to start anything new.... There's just no time and that's what it boils down to, time. The time factor and the sanity.... (Interview 2)

Susan worried about this overwhelming feeling constantly and emphasized the need to be balanced, for without rest and time, you could burnout.

Susan: One thing that I would stress more is the burnout.... No you don't have to be spent. I'm here nine and a half, ten hours a day. Then I go home and I really feel burnt out and I don't feel like marking and sometimes I cannot do marking. Sometimes I cannot do planning because my mind is gone.... It's almost too much to ask people to do.... Everyone agrees...teaching is the place to be. It consumes your entire life, and I don't believe it should. (Interview 1)

Each time Susan felt this way, she would experience an emotional breakdown either in the privacy of her classroom or in front of peers. She described three of these scenarios during the course of the year. The first incident happened on a professional development day at school. Susan expressed, "I was exhausted. I was really tired...I was trying to get work done. I had to go to it..I was feeling so stressed out and so tired that I froze up here [classroom] and I just started crying my eyes out...I was just so gone" (Interview 1).

The second incident occurred at a potluck dinner for the women teachers.

Susan: I was very, very stressed out...we were playing this little game... just a paper-pencil game and very easy. Think of two adjectives for each of these shapes... I couldn't think of an adjective for anything. It was unreal. I just couldn't think. All my thinking was gone... it seemed so stupid and so small... I did feel very foolish and I felt really stressed out. Like no, I didn't need one more thing to think about. And I burst out crying. I went to the bathroom and bawled my head off. (Interview 2)

The third emotional outburst was related to the classroom management scenario described earlier. Following the incident in the classroom, where Susan was left "shaking" and "almost losing it", she went downstairs to talk to the counsellor. Susan said, "I just started crying right in the middle of the hall... then we went to eat lunch and... I starting telling them (women in the staffroom). I burst out crying like, like in front of everybody in the staffroom. I'm bawling my head off. I felt like an idiot..."(Interview 2).

Susan proceeded to tell the female administrator about the incident and as described earlier, she burst out crying again. Throughout all of these traumatic experiences, Susan survived. The supportive relationships she established with her mentor, teaching partner, induction study group members and other staff helped

her tremendously. Positive self-talk also helped.

Susan: I felt so much better when I took on this whole new attitude. "That's right, I've got to calm down. This is not my life. And yes, the first year is going to be tough". Just give yourself as much time as possible for the planning and the marking.... talk to other people to get resources.... I've learned.... I wish I had learned earlier. To have more of a balance. (Interview 4)

4.5.4 Summary

In the four interviews with Susan, three definite themes were revealed. Her strength came from the development of strong, emotional, and supportive relationships with her mentor and teaching partner. As Susan identified, "teaching is about interpersonal relationships" with people like fellow staff members, and with students. This perspective and the support system she could count on, helped her deal with the classroom management problems she encountered. Furthermore, her positive self-talk and "keep a balanced (time for herself and time for school) life attitude", gave her the confidence and perseverance to survive the stressed-out, "drowning" feelings she encountered as a first year teacher.

4.6 Case Six: Tracy

This final case study was based on the first year teaching experiences of Tracy. Tracy was 27 years old and taught at McKinnon Junior Secondary School which enrolled 890 students. This was a French Immersion School. During this first year of teaching, Tracy taught Science 8 in French, Science 9 in French, Social Studies 9 in French and Science 8 in English. She taught a total of 185 students in her seven courses. The school's teaching staff consisted of 50 teachers of whom 16 were new to

the school. Prior to entering into the university teacher education program, Tracy worked as a French monitor in elementary French Immersion classrooms in a school district on the west coast.

Four themes were identified during Tracy's first year of teaching which affected her experiences as a beginning teacher. The themes were: supportive relationships; classroom management; lack of materials; and stress.

4.6.1 Theme one - supportive relationships

At the school Tracy received support from teachers, counsellors and resource teachers (such as ESL and LA). She especially felt supported by the members of the new teachers' induction group which met every Wednesday mornings at 7:45. This support group (sometimes labelled by the participants as the "breakfast club") consisted of three administrators, seven first year teachers and seven teachers new to the school. In addition, Tracy was supported by a mentor teacher who taught French Immersion Science. Tracy was very happy about this support system and commented, "my staff here and I have an excellent relationship. I am very, very happy.... I'm glad we have the [new teachers' group]. It makes us feel even more comfortable" (Interview 1).

Tracy's mentor, Linda, was "a friend and colleague [who] when I need stuff I'll go to... and when she needs stuff she'll come and see me" (Interview 2). Linda's classroom was in the science department of the school while Tracy's classroom was in a portable in the back field. This didn't provide much opportunity for peer observation or collaboration.

In addition to staff support, she described her principal as someone who

"supports us alot", and her two vice-principals as people who "would do anything that we asked them to" (Interview 2) which included team teaching and dealing with discipline problems immediately.

Other staff members who supported Tracy were the Learning Assistance resource teacher and the counsellor. Tracy received support from the school's Learning Assistance resource teacher who collaborated with Tracy to plan lessons for students with learning difficulties. The counsellor helped Tracy with students who were experiencing personal problems. Finally, a personal support was Tracy's fiance who was there to provide a great deal of emotional support.

Tracy's collaborations with staff members were the highlights of her first year of teaching and during the final interview she had some advice for beginning teachers.

Tracy: Develop a really good relationship with the staff and the administration. It's very, very important... if there's a problem, don't be scared to see your administration and other teachers. If there are problems, don't do it alone. It's true. (Interview 4)

4.6.2 Theme two: classroom management

During the ten months of teaching, Tracy was frustrated by having to discipline students. She recalled, "when we started our program at the university, the first question they asked us, "what was our main concern?" Everybody said it was classroom management. You know that's something I think is important to deal with" (Interview 1).

She appreciated the district's induction workshop on this topic and thought that the classroom management roleplay was extremely useful because "I had to use

it the next day and if I hadn't had practice, I would have blown up at the kid" (Interview 1).

For Tracy, classroom management was another dilemma. How strict should you be? Tracy said, "I found that at first, I wasn't strict enough and I got stricter and of course the more aggressive you get, the more aggressive they get" (Interview 1).

Tracy described a typical classroom problem.

Tracy: One child has been suspended.... [another student], I'm just ignoring him right now.... I don't want to pay more attention to him. It's not that he's aggressive but he just says "I don't care, I'm not working". So I'm struggling with that and in the same class, there are two other boys.... (Interview 1)

Throughout term one, she continued to worry about her classroom management and described it in frustration.

Tracy: There's just one student who I'm having problems with. She is going to have to be transferred out or something like that. I feel that I have not helped her as much as I could...I'm really trying. Everytime she comes into my class, she manages to disrupt the whole class and I have to constantly send her to the office. And as soon as she leaves, it's like a miracle. The class is normal again, and I can get on with it. (Interview 2)

Furthermore, Tracy felt that during the year, she wasn't consistent with her classroom management because "at times I just let the kids do it and let the lesson flow" (Interview 3). In the final interview when Tracy was asked to identify the lowpoint during her first year of teaching, she reaffirmed her frustrations around the classroom management dilemma.

Tracy: Recently everyday, it's been like nag, nag, nag to one kid or another and they are not doing their stuff and not on task. It's really bothering me.... It's nothing really bad because when I tell the kids to do something, they do it. I guess I'm becoming a bit impatient now with them. It's not just their fault. It's now the end of the year and they

want to finish. I want to finish. (Interview 4)

Tracy's classroom management dilemma was amplified whenever she was away from the classroom attending in-district or out-of-district professional development workshops. Due to her many absences to participate in these workshops, upon her return she found her students, as Tracy described it, more "rowdy" and less manageable.

Tracy: I went to Prince George in October. That was a couple of days and then the Science Convention was another couple of days. Then there were other workshops here and there. I think that my absence took a toll on the kids and it was kind of hard to control them.... At the end, when I was at the science convention, I asked my principal to come into my class just to see how things were going. And he really calmed the kids down... and then I came back that Monday and I said, "this is it. There will be no more fooling around...." I'd like to go to a lot of things but I find...that I'm going to have to take it a bit easier. (Interview 2)

She acknowledged that her absence created problems for the students and created another dilemma for Tracy. Should she be attending professional development to enhance her teaching or should she stay at the school so that the students could get the best of her presence in school? This dilemma caused Tracy to not attend many daytime workshops and she made the suggestion to have more afterschool workshops.

In addition to frustrations around her students misbehaving when she returned, Tracy also heard from her students that the substitutes were not good. This concerned Tracy and on several occasions she questioned the quality of substitutes.

Tracy: I know my kids, especially my English groups, can get really rowdy but I give them hell when I come back. I do talk to my kids and I ask them to be honest "how was the sub?" and I'm hearing some really bad comments from the kids.... A sub who comes into my class and is really

strict and wants silence will have problems. The kids can't change overnight. I tell them (substitutes) that they are a little bit rowdy and if they do their work, it's okay. And I get things like "never on task and this and this". Some of this is understandable because they are used to class discussion and expressing themselves and with a sub you just can't. That's one of the things that made me a bit mad. (Interview 3)

In addition, Tracy felt that "it's a lot of work preparing for the sub and unfortunately, a lot of the times, they don't do exactly the things that you want them to do" (Interview 2). Furthermore, Tracy felt that when there was a substitute, "it's very difficult for the kids... you can't do any labs... they have to work from the textbook" (Interview 2).

Tracy was very sensitive to the needs of her students and explained the problems encountered by substitutes to differences in presentation styles. She felt that a substitute should provide students with seatwork out of a book while for her she could engage in more interactive activities like discussions and hands-on lab experiences. Also, she was frustrated that upon her return, she would have to review the lesson that the substitute failed to cover.

4.6.3 Theme three: lack of materials

As with all beginning teachers, Tracy experienced frustration when she arrived at her school during the summer to set up her classroom. Tracy commented, "when I came in here, I had no materials, nothing. I didn't know that I had to scrounge around and really be aggressive, just take everything I could" (Interview 1).

To further her frustrations, she discovered that she had to request an overhead projector from the librarian. Luckily for her, she received one on the

Friday before the start of school and commented that, "if I had waited until Monday, I would probably not have gotten one" (Interview 1). To Tracy, this lack of materials was totally frustrating because "it has nothing to do with teaching..." (Interview 3).

Another dilemma Tracy encountered was the fact that her classroom was in a portable. Is it an advantage or disadvantage for a beginning teacher?

Tracy: Being in a portable, I find it really frustrating because I can't get a VCR. Today this person from the district is suppose to be teaching my kids the Family Life program and I have to go to the library and drag my overhead projector to the library. I have to beg the PE department to get the videomachine in there.... If I'm going to stay in a portable then there's a couple of things that I need.... Being a first year teacher, you can't demand so much but at the same time, this is ridiculous. (Interview 3)

Being in a portable was frustrating but she also felt glad to be there. She remarked, "I'm glad that I am in a portable. If they ever put me in a classroom, the other teachers are just going to kill me because some of my classes are really loud. Really loud" (Interview 3).

In reality, Tracy was in a portable because the school population was growing at a very rapid pace. Tracy was concern that this continuous growth was affecting the school tone.

Tracy: The school is suppose to be for 700 kids and we're 890 right now. So it's bulging. The kids don't know where to go at lunch time. A lot of my concerns are not my teaching... It's just things like materials [and equipment].... I have a lot of concerns about the physical appearance of the school and how it would also help the kids behaviour-wise. They feel trapped. The school is just too small. And if they are going to accept more kids next year. It's going to be ridiculous, because I don't know where they are going to put them. (Interview 3)

4.6.4 Theme four: stress

Throughout her first year of teaching, Tracy felt overwhelmed, tired and stressed. Teaching was keeping her very busy and she could hardly wait for the holiday breaks, especially Christmas break in term one and Spring Break in term two. Tracy commented, "there's a lot of work in teaching. In the first month, it is very scary. You have to learn all the routines of the school. You have to get to know the staff members, the administration, everything..." (Interview 3).

When Tracy reflected on the first term, she commented,

Tracy: November was awful. It was a really, really bad month.... I was expecting to have a low point. It's going to be like this all year. Some days are going to be great. Some days are going to be horrible. So I'm just learning to accept it right now. I think it took that shock of a whole month being really bad to just wake me up. (Interview 2)

This survival attitude about having great days and horrible days, helped Tracy during her first year of teaching. This attitude gave her confidence during the difficult days. During her third interview in February, Tracy again expressed her feelings of being overwhelmed and tired. This time she also referred to her teaching load in having to prepare four different courses and having to teach in both French and English.

Tracy: I'm losing my voice again. For the fifth time this year.... I'm thinking about the end. I'm looking forward to March break because I'm so tired. Everybody's exhausted. It's a big stretch, January and February without anything. I'm just thinking about getting these marks finished and relaxing. But I've just finished doing projects with my grade 8's and 9's. We had Open House yesterday where the parents of grade 7's came in.... Hopefully next year I will get all French Immersion. I'm finding it too difficult in going from French to English. (Interview 3)

Her advice to beginning teachers reflected her survival attitude which gave

her the perseverance to make it through her first year of teaching.

Tracy: Don't be discouraged. I could honestly say, that out of ten months, for about two months in total I was depressed. I was beginning to think "this isn't going very well". It's alot to think about but it's normal in your first year. Hopefully it'll get better... if you want help, then you should seek it. (Interview 4)

4.6.5 Summary

During the four interviews with Tracy, four definite themes were revealed. Her positive feelings about teaching resulted from her supportive relationships developed at the school amongst many members of the staff especially with her administrators and members of the new teachers' induction group. The emotional support from these relationships helped her deal with the frustrations she encountered from classroom management problems.

In addition, Tracy experienced concerns about the lack of supplies and equipment and felt overwhelmed and stressed. These concerns made the teaching experience difficult. She dealt with them successfully because of her survival attitude which was that "first year of teaching will have its ups and downs". Her positive relationships with others and her attitude of optimism made the difference!

4.7 Summary of the six cases

These stories highlight some of the experiences of these six first year teachers. Their perceptions of problems encountered, support received and dilemmas experienced provide us with some insights into what happened in their first year of teaching as they participated in the Wellington School District's Beginning Teacher

Induction/Mentoring Program. Despite their different backgrounds and individual teaching situations, they experienced some common perceptions of being first year teachers. Their stories illustrate their concerns, supportive relationships, and dilemmas. In the next chapter, further analysis of these common themes of experiences will be described.

Chapter 5

Common Perceptions

5.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the common themes of experiences amongst the six beginning teachers participating in the Wellington School District's Beginning Teacher Induction/Mentoring Program. These common themes will relate to the two research questions addressed by the study: what are the perceptions of six beginning teachers participating in a District Induction Program about their experiences teaching (what types of support did they receive in their schools from the Program) and what are the beginning teachers' perceptions of the value of the District-wide component of the Induction Program?

The first part of the chapter focusses on the common themes of experiences of the beginning teachers while the second part focusses on the perceived value of the induction program on their first year of teaching.

5.1 Beginning Teachers' Common Themes

The discussion in this section was drawn from the analyzed data from the six mini-case studies. Common themes of experiences amongst the six beginning teachers are described. It was evident that there were factors that could either support or challenge teachers in their first year of teaching. Two common themes were identified by these six beginning teachers: stress and supportive relationships. Table 5.1 summarizes the themes from each mini-case study as identified in Chapter

four. In Chapter four, a theme was identified "if the issue, concern or dilemmas persisted throughout the year and was discussed in all four interviews".

TABLE 5.1 Summary of themes from the six case studies

Experience	supportive relationships	stress	classroom management	other
Teacher				
Katey	x	x		loneliness
Leigh	x	x		teaching philos, being unaware
Margaret	x	x		job sharing, diversity
Sue		x		lack of support
Susan	x	x	x	
Tracy	x	x	x	lack of materials

5.1.1 Common theme - stress

For all six beginning teachers, one common theme was identified. They all felt stressed in their first year of teaching. Feeling stressed, tired and overwhelmed looked generally the same for all six teachers: "drowning in information" as expressed by Susan; "trying to catchup but always falling behind" as stated by Sue; "dealing with neurotic parents" as maintained by Leigh; and "consumed by teaching" as described by Katey, Margaret and Tracy. These feelings of stress resulted from too much planning, marking, and paperwork, and never having enough time. These beginning teachers were concerned about teacher stress leading to burnout and expressed the advice of "not doing it alone" (Susan, Margaret), "asking for help" (Katey, Leigh), and "getting support". In addition, they expressed the need for a

"balanced life" and stated that "teaching should not consume your life".

The start of the school year was considered the most stressful part of the entire year. Changing schools in September caused a great deal of stress for Katey while changing teaching assignments stressed Sue. Tracy felt November was the worst month because of all the activities she was involved in, and Susan felt frustrated by the whole first term because of the planning and marking. Leigh was overwhelmed in September because of "neurotic parents" and Margaret was stressed by having to deal with "needy kids". Only after Christmas break did events start to look better for some of these beginning teachers.

5.1.2 Common theme - supportive relationships

The second common theme was expressed by five of the beginning teachers in the study. Katey, Leigh, Margaret, Susan and Tracy identified supportive relationships as an important experience in their first year of teaching. This support was generally described as either emotional or collaborative. Emotional support, as Susan described it, was the "warm fuzzy" statements and collaborative support was described as the co-planning experiences. In all cases there were at least two staff members identified in these supportive roles.

Sue was the only beginning teacher in this study who expressed a lack of support from her mentor and administrators. Although she received some support from her mentor during the first three weeks of the school year, Sue lost access to her mentor when the timetable changed and she accepted the Kindergarten teaching assignment. During interviews three and four, Sue expressed appreciation to two primary teachers that she was getting support from (one of them was Katey, another

beginning teacher in this study).

In the District induction program, each beginning teacher was, as Leigh expressed, "hooked" up with a mentor teacher. Of the six beginning teachers, three of them (Leigh, Katey, Susan) received their main support from their respective mentor teachers. As for the other three, they received their support from other staff members: Margaret's support was mainly from her teaching partner and buddy teacher; Sue's support was from two primary teachers; and Tracy's support came from her three administrators.

Table 5.2 identifies the factors that influenced the beginning teacher/mentor teacher relationship. The self rating scores in column two correspond to each beginning teacher's perceived level of success in her first year of teaching. The scale ranges from one (poor) to ten (excellent). Column three represents the beginning teachers' perceived level of support from their respective mentor teachers. Column four indicates the classroom proximity score which identifies the distance between the beginning teacher's classroom and the mentor teacher's classroom. Each unit on this scale is equivalent to a 5 metre distance. In column five there is an indication by the beginning teacher as to the similarity in teaching assignments between the beginning teacher and mentor teacher.

TABLE 5.2 Beginning Teacher/Mentor Teacher Relationship
Perception by beginning teachers

Information Teacher	self rating of success score*	support from mentor	classroom proximity score**	similar teaching assignment
Katey	8	yes	2	yes
Leigh	9	yes	2	yes
Susan	8/9	yes	1	yes
Tracy	7	no	5	yes
Margaret	7	no	4	no
Sue	6	no	3	yes

* Self rating scale: 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent) perception of success in first year of teaching

** Classroom proximity scale: 1 2 3 4 5
0m 5m 10m 15m 20m distance between classrooms

Katey, Leigh and Susan rated their first year of teaching as either an eight or nine out of a maximum of ten. These scores indicate a very high level of perceived success. The data in Table 5.2 show that these beginning teachers received support from their respective mentor teachers, were close to their mentors' classrooms and had reasons to collaborate with them because of their similar teaching assignments. Similar teaching assignments for these beginning teacher/mentor teacher teams helped to promote collaboration: Katey and Louise planned experiences for grade 3's; Leigh and Sue planned experiences for grade 1's; and Susan and Leanne planned lessons for Business Education 10.

On the other hand, Tracy, Margaret and Sue experienced a more difficult year. As shown in Table 5.2, none of these beginning teachers received support from their

respective mentor teachers. Both Tracy and her mentor taught the Science 9 course in French but due to the distance between their respective classrooms, they were unable to collaborate. For Margaret, her teaching assignment was not only different from her mentor, but their classrooms were in separate wings of the school and over a distance of 15 metres. In Sue's case, although she and her mentor were both LA teachers, Sue worked with students in grades 6-7 while her mentor worked with students in grades 1-5. In addition, Sue's classroom was 10 metres from Mavis' LA resource center.

All six beginning teachers experienced emotional support from their colleagues and appreciated the encouraging comments and behaviours which helped them get through the tough days. An aspect of emotional support was "personal" support which was an important factor to consider in this analysis. Personal support is defined here as support provided by family or friends outside of the school. Three of the six beginning teachers indicated this personal support: Leigh from her husband; Sue from her family; and Tracy from her fiancé.

At the school, there were many relationships perceived as supportive in addition to the mentors. They included support from: a formalized school-based induction group; administrators; and resource teachers.

In three schools there were formalized school-based induction support groups that met on a regular basis to discuss issues which arose out of their teaching experiences. In these induction groups, Leigh, Susan and Tracy, felt supported. Administrative support was appreciated too: Leigh received support in dealing with a parent; Margaret received instructional/collaborative support; and both Susan and Tracy received support in dealing with discipline problems.

Four of the beginning teachers described situations where collaborative support occurred. Here collaborative support was defined as co-planning lessons, activities and units. Katey planned units with her mentor Louise, while Leigh planned multi-aging experiences with her mentors Sue and Jamie. Margaret planned buddy reading programs with her buddy teacher Mark while Susan planned Business Education lessons with her mentor Leanne.

The schools' resource teachers were also a source of collaborative support for the beginning teachers. Tracy worked with the Learning Assistance teacher to plan modified units and consulted with the counsellor on many occasions about students. Susan worked closely with her school counsellor while Margaret collaborated with the LA teacher, the ESL teacher, the counsellor and the librarian to support the diverse needs of the children in her classroom.

Other support personnel included women on staff, other teachers, teaching assistants, parent volunteers, and teacher consultants. Margaret received additional support from her classroom assistant and a volunteer parent. Sue and Katey received support from other primary teachers and Susan received additional support from some of the women on staff. Both Margaret and Susan, invited school district consultants to support them in learning how to implement new teaching strategies in their respective classrooms.

Thus, many people were involved in providing the emotional, personal and collaborative support to these six beginning teachers and helped to make their first year of teaching less difficult.

5.1.3 Common issues and dilemmas experienced by beginning teachers

Besides the commonly perceived themes of stress and supportive relationships, several other issues were identified by these beginning teachers as having an impact on their first year of teaching: classroom management, dealing with parents, loneliness, teaching philosophy, lack of materials, job sharing, fears, teacher preparation programs, dealing with diversity, being unaware, and misassignment. A brief discussion of these issues will be described in this section.

Classroom management was identified by both Susan and Tracy. It took the form of either discipline or motivation. Both these secondary teachers experienced concerns about disruptive classes and had to recruit the support of their administrators.

Leigh and Sue raised concerns about dealing with parents. Leigh had to deal with an irate parent for the entire year while Sue experienced a frustrating situation where a parent complained to the principal about her program instead of informing her. In both cases Leigh and Sue were dealing with parents who had concerns about the new Primary Program.

Katey and Sue expressed concerns about loneliness and isolation. In their small school, they had a difficult time finding someone to co-plan lessons with because they were the only ones in the school teaching their respective assignments.

Sue, Leigh and Margaret were concerned about the contrasting philosophies of hands-on discovery learning and the "traditional" methods of worksheets and basal readers. Their understanding of the new Primary Program influenced the way they planned their classroom experiences. This approach was not understood by parents and did not receive complete support from fellow staff members.

Margaret, Leigh, Sue, Katey and Tracy identified a lack of resources which included: glue; math and science manipulatives; overhead projectors; and videomachines. This caused frustration for these beginning teachers because, as Tracy stated, a lack of materials should have "nothing to do with teaching".

Leigh, Katey, and Sue were concerned with "not knowing" about certain school routines and procedures such as sign-in attendance books, preparation periods, and allocation of supplies. They attributed this "not knowing" to being inexperienced new teachers, being taken advantaged of and not being included in certain decision making processes.

Another concern identified by these first year teachers was fear. Both Leigh and Susan initially feared their respective principals and experienced colleagues. Only time and getting to know them alleviated their fears but Susan remained cautious. In addition, Susan feared, what she called, some of her "mean" and "manipulative" students, because she felt they would challenge her because of her inexperience. Sue and Leigh feared they might lose their jobs if they "rocked the boat" (as Leigh described), and complained about parental confrontations. Similarly, they were concerned and felt helpless as these parents gossiped to other parents about their teaching.

Another major concern was with teacher preparation programs. They felt that teacher preparation programs were too theoretical and did not prepare them for the "real" teaching situations. For example, they felt that they were unprepared to communicate with parents (in parent conferences, about report cards, and about the philosophies of the new programs). They also felt that there was very little opportunity in the preparation programs to plan for yearlong classroom experiences

and ways to deal with the diversity in their classrooms which resulted from mainstreaming students.

Misassignment also caused a great deal of stress for Sue, Susan and Tracy. This concern was the root of much of their anxiety in their first year of teaching. Sue taught Kindergarten and Learning Assistance. Susan taught Business Education 10. Tracy taught Science 8 in English. All three of them had no university preparation or practicum experiences in these teaching assignments. It seemed that these misassignments led to a great deal of difficulties.

Some of these issues could have been less stressful for these beginning teachers. Cuban refers to some of these issues as "dilemmas". A dilemma is defined as a problem that didn't have a solution but only "good-enough compromises" (Cuban, 1992, p. 6). These beginning teachers were faced with dilemmas where there were no neat solution. If these identified issues could be reframed as dilemmas, then maybe these beginning teachers would have felt less stressed. Four of these identified issues will be briefly described in the next few paragraphs to illustrate what is meant by teaching dilemmas: asking for and getting support; classroom management; teaching philosophy; and balance.

A dilemma that Susan faced was whether to ask for support. If she asked for support, would she be perceived as being inadequate? Beginning teachers need to be supported by people, time and resources but how much support is required and how do others perceive these request for support? How do we ensure that it is appropriate to ask for support? Without the necessary support beginning teachers will get stressed.

A dilemma for Tracy and Susan was their approach to classroom

management: should teachers be firm or easy? Should teachers develop friendships with their students? Tracy was always sensitive to students' moods and would explain their disruptive behaviours by saying "it's close to Christmas", and "when I'm absent, they get restless". Susan needed positive feedback from her students and when they said things like "that was excellent", "it was so interesting", she felt good (Interview 4). It seemed that Tracy and Susan needed to be comfortable with their approaches to classroom management and both knew that developing their own style would happen after more experience.

Leigh, Margaret and Sue were faced with a teaching philosophy dilemma. Should they set up programs that used the traditional worksheets and basal readers approach or the discovery, hands-on learning approach? To heighten their dilemma, there were the expectations of parents. For Leigh and Sue, this hands-on approach was perceived by some parents and teachers, as (Leigh called it) just "playing" around but for them, this approach created fun, learning experiences for children. Tracy encountered this dilemma of traditional approach versus the hands-on approach when she discussed the issue of preparing for substitutes. She suggested that the instructional method for students in the presence of a substitute was to read and to do work out of the textbook as compared to the instructional methods she would use which would be hands-on labs and discussions.

A final dilemma for these six beginning teachers was how to maintain a "balanced life" as a first year teacher. Teaching was a very time consuming career. It took longer to plan great lessons if you were a beginning teacher so how much time should be spent on planning? Can you still have a life if you were a beginning teacher? Should you ignore your personal expectations of being the best teacher for

these kids or should you compromise and be an adequate teacher and try to survive the year? As Lortie (1975) stated, the beginning teacher was responsible for teaching students from the very first day and was expected to perform the very same tasks that the veteran of 25 years performed. "Tasks are not added sequentially to allow for a gradual increase in skill and knowledge; the beginner learns while performing the full complement of teaching duties" (1975, p.72). Was this expectation to perform well realistic? Who's expectation was this? How could you maintain a balanced life in your first years of teaching?

Thus, it appears that teaching is about "managing dilemmas". These dilemmas cannot be ignored and there are no quick-fix easy answers but experience over time makes a difference. These beginning teachers are just starting their careers and may be encountering some of these issues for the first time. Reframing these issues in terms of dilemmas would make it less stressful for them because instead of looking for "neat solutions", they could be managing them over time with an understanding that these dilemmas were endemic to teaching.

5.2 Beginning Teachers' Perceptions - value of the District-wide component of the Induction Program

The discussion in this section was based on the analysis of the beginning teachers' experiences related to the Wellington School District's Beginning Teacher Induction/Mentoring Program. There were two components to this District induction program: school-based and district. From the previous section, these beginning teachers described their experiences at the school level in terms of perceived concerns, level of support and dilemmas encountered. They described

their experiences in the context of being in their schools. In this section, they will describe their perceptions of the District component of the induction program.

The Wellington School District's Beginning Teacher Induction/Mentoring Program was perceived by these six beginning teachers to be supportive and beneficial. Tracy said, "I just like the fact... that the school district is at least considering new teachers and is taking care of them" (Interview 1) whereas Susan remarked that the, "induction program is very worthwhile. It is really needed and appreciated. It's good that somebody cares. Yeh, the first year is not easy [and] no you don't have to totally do it yourself. There is some support for you" (Interview 4).

The District component consisted of workshops and support by the district resource team. The content of the workshops presented during the year were considered by the beginning teachers to be very relevant. Topics included: description of the induction program; getting started; classroom management; assessment strategies; reporting to parent; dealing with diversity; and planning for active learning. In addition, the format and timing of the workshops were found to be appropriate. These beginning teachers liked the variety of being able to participate in small, whole and focus group discussions and valued the flexibility of being able to attend during morning, afterschool or all day workshop sessions. They also found the handouts at the workshops useful and practical.

In addition, they appreciated the introductions to district personnel and the time for discussion with other first year teachers. Katey was quite specific in what she valued, "I think the people who were putting the program together made a real effort to inform us. They gave us lists of names of people from the board office and

the [district support team]. So I feel like I have a good base. Like I know who to phone, who to consult with, and who to talk to if I do have a problem with something" (Interview 1).

Through the induction program, professional development money was allocated to each beginning teacher. This money was considered "wonderful" (Leigh, Katey) because it gave them opportunities to visit other classrooms and to collaborate with other educators.

The beginning teachers perceived the most important aspect of the District induction program to be the mentorship component. Margaret stated that "I think that the mentoring program, if it does nothing else, is good because it gives time for a beginning teacher to make a friend on staff and to make a close connection and that is really important." (Interview 2). Leigh echoed these sentiments by saying, "I think it is a great program. I think the idea of putting mentors in the school is fantastic. I can't imagine anything more frightening than going to a school, being a first year teacher there, and no one is there to welcome you or help you. The whole program is wonderful" (Interview 4).

In addition to their positive perceptions of the District induction program, these six beginning teachers made many suggestions to improve it. They suggested: fewer district sessions (Tracy), a one day summer seminar earlier in August (Sue, Margaret, Susan), and a September orientation later in September (Leigh). They felt that there should be small group discussions around specific issues with examples from specific grade levels and thus recommended separating elementary teachers from secondary teachers and also separating beginning teachers from experienced teachers new to the District (Tracy, Leigh).

Several of the beginning teachers suggested that the duration of icebreaker activities be shortened in order to have more time to focus on the practical issues of: planning lessons; sharing classroom management strategies; and planning activities for active learning and inclusion (Leigh, Susan, Margaret). Additional topics suggested for future workshop sessions included: conflict resolution; dealing with parents; strategies for multi-aging; and ways of working with each other. It seemed important to these teachers that there were activities designed to establish support systems and to keep a "balanced life". A final recommendation by these beginning teachers was for the Induction Program to continue into a second year to support them in their second year of teaching.

From these accounts, it seem that the District induction program was valuable and had an impact on the experiences of these six beginning teachers. They perceived that this program made a difference and supported them as they made the transition from the university-based preparation program to full-time employment in the school.

5.3 Summary

This chapter identified common themes of experiences of the six beginning teachers in the Wellington School District's Beginning Teacher Induction/Mentoring Program. It seemed that the District program (both school-based and district-wide components) had an impact on their experiences and was valued by them. Their experiences reflected a difficult year filled with stress and dilemmas of teaching but these six teachers survived due to the support of their mentors, administrators and other staff members. Here are some of their reflective

comments as expressed during the interviews. Sue commented, "I thought it was a really good idea. It really made you feel like part of the district. I really liked the welcoming.... I really liked the district support" (Interview 2). Margaret maintained that, "the induction program does show beginning teachers that Wellington cares about them and it values them as teachers and as professionals and it's willing to do anything that it can to welcome them to the profession of teaching.... (Interview 2).

In reflection, Tracy commented, "I just want to be able to finish this year and say that I know that I didn't do all the things that I wanted to do but it's understandable because I was just keeping my head above water (Interview 3). Susan reflected, "I've tried to gear my teaching most of the time to have some engagement for the kids.... I've seen how I've grown. I've see how my strategies have gotten better. I am definitely learning to deal with every situation better especially with kids" (Interview 4).

For advice to other beginning teachers, Tracy said, "don't be discouraged" (Interview 4) while Margaret suggested, "you can't do everything all at once so do everything one at a time.... Don't isolate yourself" (Interview 4). Sue commented, "take some time out to relax... be cautious... ask for help... be aware that a small problem could potentially lead into a bigger problem and jump on it right away" (Interview 3). Leigh suggested, "just relax... don't worry about things... it doesn't matter... I think you get caught up in teaching... stop pressuring yourself.... You have to sit back... do your best but don't worry. The most important thing is that if your kids are having fun and they enjoy coming to school, then you are doing an excellent job..." (Interview 4). Katey encouraged beginning teachers to "set high expectations" (Interview 2). If something is bothering you, go and talk to someone.

It's so much better" (Interview 4).

Thus, the District induction program had an effect on the experiences of these beginning teachers. As illustrated by their comments, they valued the program. In the final chapter, the major findings to the two research questions will be reviewed and linked to the literature review. In addition, other interesting issues arising out of the study will be identified and briefly discussed. In closing, implications for future research on induction programs will be raised.

Chapter 6

Conclusions, Discussion, and Implications

6.0 Introduction

The conclusion, discussion, and implications for practice that appear in this chapter were drawn from the analysis of the data derived from the experiences of the six beginning teachers in the research study. This chapter is divided into four sections: review of the study; conclusions emerging from the two research questions; a discussion of the issues arising from the study; and implications for practice and possibilities for future research.

6.1 Review of the study

The purpose of the study is two-fold: to gain some insights into the perceptions of beginning teachers in a District Induction Program (in terms of their perceived concerns, level of support and dilemmas encountered), and to determine the value of the induction program on their first year teaching experiences.

In this research study, a review of the literature on perceived problems of beginning teachers and types of support program, was conducted. The Wellington School District's Beginning Teacher Induction/Mentoring Program was the context for this study. The program provided an induction experience for 85 first year teachers and this study describes the experiences of six of those beginning teachers.

The District induction program has two components: school-based and district. The activities of these two components are designed to support beginning teachers as they are "led into" the teaching profession. The role of the district is to

provide an awareness of the program's goals through district-wide communication and workshops presented by the district resource team while the role of the school is to provide specific day-to-day support for the beginning teacher through the mentor teacher, administrator and other teachers at the school.

The six participants in the study were interviewed four times during the year. Their audiotaped interviews were transcribed and analyzed. Themes of experiences were identified for each teacher and then common themes were identified based on the experiences of all six teachers in their first year of teaching.

6.2 Conclusions emerging from the research questions

Two general questions provided a focus for the study:

- What are the perceptions of six beginning teachers, participating in a District Induction Program, about their experiences teaching?
 - What types of support did they receive in their schools from the Program?
- What are the beginning teachers' perceptions of the value of the District-wide component of the Induction Program?

Chapter four identified the themes of experiences for each beginning teacher while Chapter five identified their common themes of experiences.

The findings to the first research question are outlined in Chapter five. A major common perception of concern amongst these six beginning teachers was stress which could lead to burnout. This problem is identified in the literature (Schwab & Iwanicki, 1982; Gold, 1985; Maslach, Jackson & Schwab, 1986; Gold, 1987; Gold, 1989; Ayalon, 1989). The literature review (Veenman, 1984), however indicates that the number one problem for beginning teachers was classroom management. This issue will be discussed further in the next section.

Other concerns, identified by some but not all of these beginning teachers, include: classroom management; loneliness; teaching philosophy; being unaware of school routines; job sharing; dealing with diversity; and a lack of materials. Other concerns identified by a few teachers in specific interviews included: fear; motivating students; lack of planning time; misassignment; and teacher preparation programs.

These concerns, as Lortie (1975) points out, result from the fact that beginning teachers are responsible for teaching students from the very first day and are expected to perform the very same tasks that the veteran of 25 years performs. In the study, these concerns led to three of the six beginning teachers feeling that their first year of teaching was somewhat unsuccessful; they rated their experience a six or seven out of a maximum scale of ten.

The findings in this study on perceived concerns were similar to those identified in the literature review: classroom management (Clewitt, 1984; Odell 1986a; Veenman, 1984); motivating students (Clewitt, 1984; Veenman, 1984); planning and instruction (Boccia, 1991; Clewitt, 1984; Covert et al, 1991; Odell 1986a; Ryan, 1986); loneliness and isolation (Cochran-Smith, 1991; Feinman-Mesmser & Floden, 1986; Little, 1981; Lortie, 1975; Sarason, 1971); misassignment (Clewitt, 1984; Hoffman et al, 1985; Huling-Austin et al, 1986; Lortie, 1975; Sullivan, 1988); lack of time (Ayalon, 1989; Snow, 1988, Clewitt, 1984); teaching preparation programs (Snow, 1988); lack of materials (Odell 1986a; Veenman, 1984); and dealing with diversity (Veenman, 1984).

Many of these identified concerns, issues and problems have no quick-fix solutions. Cuban (1992) calls these concerns "dilemmas" because he feels that only

temporary "good-enough compromises" result and that renegotiation of the problems must continually occur. "Dilemmas" recur frequently throughout a teaching career and are endemic to the teaching profession. In Chapter five, there was a brief discussion on dilemmas such as classroom management, teaching philosophy, asking for and getting support, and a "balanced life".

The findings of this study led to a second common theme. Five of the beginning teachers experienced supportive relationships. This support was further defined as emotional, personal and collaborative. These beginning teachers perceived strong support from various staff members at the school including: mentors, buddy teachers, teaching partners, administrators, resource teachers, counsellors, and members of their school-based induction groups. The mentor relationship was identified as the most important support in three of the mini-case studies. This support was central to assisting the beginning teachers "survive" their first year of teaching. The important role of support teachers has been documented in the literature review as a key to the success of first year teachers (Brooks, 1987; Fox & Singletary, 1986; Kester & Marockie, 1987; Jensen, 1987; Huffman & Leak, 1986; Huling-Austin et al, 1986; Huling-Austin, 1989; Lewis, 1980; Marshall, 1983).

In addition, as described in Chapter five, in the cases where the mentor teacher was the key support component, the factors of pairing the experienced teacher with the beginning teacher based on close proximity of classrooms, similar teaching assignments and compatible personalities, made the difference. These factors were amongst the ones identified by Huling-Austin (1986).

The findings to the second research question are found in Chapters four and five. The six beginning teachers in this study perceived the District induction

program to be supportive and valuable. They appreciated the opportunities to meet with each other on a regular basis to discuss issues that were identified by them. Such topics included classroom management, assessment strategies, ways of communicating with parents, and planning for active learning. In addition to these workshops, they appreciated other aspects of the district program which included: a handbook (containing information on materials, district personnel etc.); several orientation workshops to participants in the induction program; a mechanism for monitoring and dealing with issues that arose related to the induction program; ongoing support by the district resource team of consultants; and, funding for release time to visit other schools, attend district workshops and, planning with mentor teachers.

These induction program components have been identified as being important and have been documented in the literature by many researchers, specifically: orientation meetings (Grant & Zeichner, 1981; Huling-Austin, 1989; Kester & Marockie, 1987; Marshall, 1983); workshops on planning and teaching (Grant & Zeichner, 1981; Kester & Marockie, 1987; Huling-Austin, 1989); release time (Huling-Austin, 1989; Lewis, 1980); support group meetings for beginning teachers (Fox & Singletary, 1986; Huling-Austin, 1989; Lewis, 1980); and handbook containing information about policies and practices (Marshall, 1983).

The findings in this study lead to several conclusions: beginning teachers experience difficulties and dilemmas in their first year of teaching; an induction program can support beginning teachers in managing these dilemmas; and an induction program can assist beginning teachers to survive their first year of teaching. The findings also lead to a general conclusion that induction success is

very much dependent on the context of each beginning teacher, specifically the characteristics of the beginning teacher, the context of the teaching situation, and the support available for that beginning teacher.

Thus, the District induction program was perceived as valuable, responsive, supportive and making a difference to the beginning teachers' first year of teaching. However, it seemed that the best effects of the induction program were felt at the school level. The District component of the induction program increased the awareness of the program's goals but the beginning teachers concluded that the school program was what made the difference. The main support component occurred at the school.

6.3 Discussion of the Issues Arising out of the Study

It is evident from this study that induction success for each teacher is dependent on the characteristics of each beginning teacher (e.g. confidence, previous experience, teaching preparation, etc.); the context of the teaching situation (e.g. class size, teaching assignment, class composition, supplies and materials, etc.); and the support program available for that beginning teacher (e.g. mentor teacher, administrator, support staff, school-based induction program, etc.). This model is proposed by Huling-Austin and Murphy (1987)

There are many similarities between the findings of the literature review and the findings of the research study. The perceived concerns of beginning teachers as found in the literature are reflected in the data obtained through interviews with the six beginning teachers in the study. In addition, some of the support features of the Wellington School District's Beginning Teachers' Induction/Mentoring

Program are found in the literature review.

The data from this study show that stress was the main concern of these beginning teachers. However, Veenman (1984) identifies the main problem to be classroom management. This difference in perceived concern might be explained by the actual presence of the induction program itself. If this is the case, then Odell's (1986c) work would reinforce this study's results. She concluded that by "offering new teachers structured support... school districts may help them diminish their discipline problems, with the result that new teachers... will be able to focus more on instructional rather than on disciplinary issues".

It appears from the existing literature and from this research study that induction programs have a role to play in supporting beginning teachers. In this study, the District induction program was multi-faceted. It provided beginning teachers with an orientation to the profession, assisted beginning teachers in dealing with concerns related to teaching, and most importantly, included the role of a mentor teacher. The presence of this induction program heightened the awareness of the alarming attrition rates and emphasized the need to provide support for beginning teachers. In this study the presence of the induction program indicates that the School District valued this type of activity and encouraged collaboration amongst teachers. In addition, the induction program symbolized to the beginning teachers that they were valuable to the District. Finally, the district-wide component provided a forum for beginning teachers to meet on a regular basis to talk about their experiences and to acknowledge that these experiences were common to all beginning teacher (Lortie, 1975); this perspective was critical in alleviating some of the stress these beginning teachers were encountering as they

managed the many dilemmas endemic to teaching.

From the study, it seems that there is a role for both the district and school-based component of the induction program. The District provides general district-wide awareness of the program's goals, funding to support induction activities, and workshops, while the school supports each individual first year teacher through specific school-based induction activities (by assigning a mentor, providing a tour of the school, providing supplies and equipment, information about school routines and procedures, providing time for planning). The school-based induction activities were cited by the participants as being the most vital to surviving their first year of teaching. Support at the school from mentor teachers and others made the difference. These comments reinforce Fullan's (1991) finding that the locus of change is in the schools.

Findings in the literature review and this study raise some additional issues to be considered in designing induction programs. Such issues are: how can we ensure appropriate teaching assignments for beginning teachers? How can we best select mentors? What is the role of administrators and other staff members in supporting beginning teachers? Is funding necessary to promote supportive relationships? Who funds induction program activities? How much funding is enough? Should there be support for second and third year teachers? How can collaboration between university programs and district programs be enhanced? Who else needs to be involved in designing and supporting induction programs? Are induction programs effective? How do you measure the success of induction programs? Which features of induction programs are critical to support new teachers? Two of these issues will be discussed in the next section; they are

selection of mentors and collaboration opportunities.

To ensure that beginning teachers have support at their school, mentor teachers are identified. In three cases in this study, the beginning teacher/mentor teacher relationships were effective while in the cases of Tracy, Margaret and Sue, they were not effective. These beginning teachers made some suggestions to enhance this relationship: select the mentor early in September; ensure that the teaching assignments are similar; ensure that the classrooms are in close proximity; and try to ensure that both have compatible personalities. In addition, Sue suggested that if the teaching assignment was varied, the beginning teacher should have access to several mentors. The one crucial factor was that the mentor must be a volunteer and had the "desire to want to be a mentor". Other questions arise: how do you select mentor teachers? Should they be selected by the administrator, by another teacher or chosen by the beginning teacher? When should this assignment take place and how long should this relationship continue? How many mentors should be assigned to each beginning teacher? Should administrators be mentors?

Members of the school are involved in supporting these beginning teachers. Different relationships were formed as the needs were identified. Hopefully collaborative relationships, modelled with beginning teachers and their support person, can be viewed as beneficial to supporting the ongoing professional development of all collaborators.

The second issue of collaboration relates to the perspective that teacher education is a continuous progress. This would imply a need for collaboration amongst educators to work together in pre-service, induction and in-service programs (Cole & McNay, 1988; Fullan, 1991; Fullan & Connelly, 1987; Griffin et al,

1983; Huling-Austin, 1990; Sullivan, 1988). Partnerships might include ministries of education, teacher federations, university education faculty members, school district personnel, and school-based personnel. Fullan maintains that,

a final critical point should be made. Induction programs should not be seen simply as an add-on. It is vitally important that the pre-service year of the fifth year programs and the induction year be considered in tandem in order to strengthen the developmental links between the two. Put another way, faculties of education should be involved in induction programs, just as school people should be involved in preservice program. Induction provides a golden opportunity to make part of the teacher education continuum a reality. (p. 309)

Similarly, Cuban (1992), comments that "as we manage dilemmas in teaching, we should be building professional communities" and thus, all educators have a role in trying to design, support and build structures to ensure beginning teacher success.

In addition to raising these additional issues, this study also surfaced some interesting notions: stages of concerns for beginning teacher and their relationship to specific induction program components; teaching as managing dilemmas and how it can alleviate "corrosive guilt" (Cuban, 1992); and how professional communities can collaborate effectively to design effective teacher education programs (pre-service, induction, in-service).

Teacher stress and attrition may be reduced if we manage dilemmas while building professional communities. If we re-examine Veenman's (1984) top eight perceived problems of beginning teachers and reframe them as dilemmas, teachers will be less hard on themselves and consequently be less stressed and more confident in their teaching. For beginning teachers, this will be a very healthy attitude and will remove some of the pressures they feel as they manage the many dilemmas they encounter in the classroom.

In addition, "professionalism among different levels of teachers can be made... based upon commonalities in teaching" (Cuban, 1992, p. 10). We, as members of the educational communities, can choose to work together in managing the dilemmas of teaching. We can engage in collaborative inquiry to manage dilemmas endemic to our profession. We can collaborate to design support programs to ensure that our newest members of the teaching profession participate fully and successfully in this professional community. As we engage in collaborative inquiry, we acknowledge that learning is an ongoing process and that through reflection we can strengthen our practice of teaching.

Huling-Austin(1990) maintains that researchers and practitioners agree that there is a need for various educational agencies to collaborate in providing support and assistance to beginning teachers. The dilemma that would result would be to identify the roles and responsibilities of these groups in the induction process. This dilemma will be an ideal vehicle for professional communities to deal with. The ultimate beneficiaries of our collaboration will be our students.

In reviewing the literature on beginning teacher problems and support programs, and from the experiences of the six beginning teachers documented in the study, it appears that induction programs are necessary to support beginning teachers as they deal with dilemmas in their first years of teaching. The two perspectives: teaching as managing of dilemmas, and teacher education as a continuous process, can be used by educators (university education preparation professors, university researchers, school district decision-makers, state/ministry education departments, teacher federations, teacher associations, etc.) in designing induction programs that will make a difference in supporting beginning teachers in

managing those dilemmas.

6.4 Implications for Practice and Future Research

The findings of this study have implications for pre-service programs, designs for induction programs, and for future research.

At the pre-service level, inclusion of research on beginning teachers' stages of concern in the university preparation program may better prepare graduates for their initial years in teaching. In addition, data about teacher attrition and ways to alleviate burnout and stress should be discussed.

Once in the teaching profession, new teachers need induction support which is responsive to their needs, compatible with the school setting which they worked, and consistent with the commitment to best practice. Accordingly, an induction program which engages the beginning teacher, school and district personnel, and university faculty in design and implementation offer the promise not only of support but of continue growth and increased confidence for new teachers. Partnerships with other agencies, such as ministries of education and teacher federations, can only enhance the potential of the induction programs.

Findings of the study underscore the importance of planning for a successful first year experience for teachers. This means providing a teaching situation where: the teaching assignment is appropriate; there is an availability of support teacher(s); and where there is adequate time for planning and instruction. These features may reduce beginning teacher stress and burnout and consequently reduce teacher attrition. In designing induction programs, developers should keep in mind the issues identified in this chapter and in Chapter two. Induction program developers

should keep in mind issues like: do induction programs contribute or hinder new teachers' estimations of their own efficacy? (Griffin, 1985); effectiveness of induction programs (McCaleb, 1985; Brooks, 1987); and influence of context on induction programs (Murphy & Huling-Austin, 1987; Zeichner, 1982; ERIC Digest, 1986c).

In terms of further research, this study's findings suggest that there is a need for understanding the beginning teacher experience over a longer time frame and to design induction programs to support them given their respective contexts.

There are many questions arising from this study. Some of them have already been raised in the previous portion of this chapter. Some immediate questions are: how we can begin to understand the dilemmas of how best to select mentors? What components of induction programs are essential given specific contexts? How can we create school environments for collaboration? How can we create a school culture where induction activities are integral fabrics of the school?

In closing, I would like to state that "induction programs do make a difference" for beginning teachers. The findings from this study support the descriptive studies found in the literature review. We, as educators, need to collaboratively plan for successful teaching experiences for beginning teachers. I agree with Fullan (1991), that "induction support is powerfully sensible, and the many potential and actual benefits for new teachers, mentors, and their schools are soon intuitively, if not actually, realized as people try out induction programs" (p. 309). *What's worth fighting for* is that

each and every teacher has a direct responsibility for helping to shape the quality of the next generation of teachers.... however good new teachers may be in academic qualifications and experiences, they still represent only raw potential. The conditions of teaching especially at the beginning, influence and sometimes determine how good a new teacher will become. This one teacher will in turn affect the quality of

learning experiences of hundreds of children over the next thirty years. What's worth fighting for is to make sure that these new teachers have better, much better, conditions for having a career.... While these are specific forms of support, we must also emphasize that they proliferate when the entire staff of a school sees it as a whole-school responsibility to welcome and support newcomers. And when the whole culture of the school is routinely collaborative, the help that new teachers receive will not be seen as special or patronizing. It will be part of the helping culture that connects all teachers as learning professionals. Few things could be so important as interactive professionalism in the service of better beginnings for the thousands of new teachers currently entering the profession. (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991, pp. 78-79)

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Appendix A: Recruitment Letter

September 18, 1991

Dear Teacher,

I am currently pursuing a master's program in the Faculty of Education at the University of Brighouse. The title of my proposed study is "1991/92 Wellington School District's Beginning Teacher Induction/Mentoring Program".

My thesis will describe the 1991/92 Wellington Beginning Teacher Induction/Mentoring Program and the perceptions that beginning teachers have about the program. My thesis questions are:

- What are some perceptions of beginning teachers participating in a District induction program?
- What are the beginning teachers' perceptions of the value of the District-wide component of the induction program?

For this study, an ethnographic design is considered appropriate and thus I have invited Nadine Binkley, a Ph D student from the university to assist me in documenting the data. Her role will be to interview the volunteer participants about their perceptions of the Teacher Induction program and this will involve no more than four interviews (maximum 2 hours total) during the year. The data obtained will be kept confidential and will be read only by the persons conducting the study. Analysis and research findings will be shared with the volunteer participants. In addition, your name will not be identified and any tape recordings will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

The proposed study has significant potential benefits because it will contribute to the improvement of Wellington School District's Beginning Teacher Induction/Mentoring Program and thus will hopefully help to foster a more effective supportive climate for new teachers which will result in minimizing teacher attrition.

Please indicate your consent to participate in this study by completing the form attached. If at any time you choose to withdraw from the study you may do so without being prejudiced. If you have any questions you may contact me at 668-7077 (o) or 255-9437 (h). I appreciate your consideration of this request and I am hope that you will look forward to participating in this study.

Sincerely,

Wendy Lim, Masters Student

cc Dr. Gaalen Erickson, Faculty Adviser/Co-researcher, Faculty of Education
Nadine Binkley, Research Assistant, Faculty of Education
Director, Learning Services Department, Wellington School Board

/2

Consent Form

I _____, consent to participate in the study
"1991/92 Wellington School District's Beginning Teacher Induction/Mentoring
Program" with co-researcher Wendy Lim.

Signature of Teacher

Date

*Please return this portion to Wendy at the Wellington School Board Office as soon
as possible. Thanks.*

Appendix B - Letter of Confirmation

September 30, 1991

Dear

Re: 1991/1992 Wellington School District's Beginning Teacher
Induction/Mentoring Program:
Participation in the Research Study

I hope that everything is going well as you are heading into October, your second month of teaching!

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this exciting study. As described in my earlier discussions, my thesis questions for this study are:

- What are some perceptions of beginning teachers participating in a District induction program?
- What are the beginning teachers' perceptions of the value of the District-wide component of the induction program?

I have been meeting with Nadine Binkley, the research assistant, and she will be contacting you four times during the year to interview you. Each interview will last about 30 minutes and each session will be audiotaped. I would like to reassure you that: your name will not be identified, in the study you will be given a pseudonym, the data collected will be kept confidential and any tape recordings will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study. I am interested in your perceptions and experiences in the Teacher Induction Program so that future programs will better meet the needs of beginning teachers.

Nadine and I will be contacting you directly at the school and will be setting up appropriate times with you for the interviews. The four interview dates have been scheduled for October, December, February/March, and May of this school year. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me anytime at 668-7077 (o) or 255-9437 (h).

Once again, I appreciate your enthusiasm in volunteering to participate in my study and I thank you in advance for putting the time aside to provide feedback about the Teacher Induction Program! Have a great 1991/92!

Sincerely,

Wendy Lim
c/o Wellington School Board Office

cc Nadine Binkley, Research Assistant, 266-0627 (h)

Appendix C - Interview Schedule

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date #1/place/time</u>	<u>Date #2/place/time</u>	<u>Date #3/place/time</u>	<u>Date #4/place/time</u>
Tracy	October 11, 1991 12:45, portable	December 11, 1991 9:30, portable	February 28, 1992 8:30, portable	May 15, 1992 8:30, portable
Susan	October 22, 1992 11:45, classroom	December 6, 1991 11:45, classroom	February 27, 1992 11:30, classroom	May 13, 1992 11:50, classroom
Marg	October 24, 1991 10:15, classroom	December 5, 1991 11:45, classroom	March 5, 1992 10:15, classroom	May 14, 1992 10:15, classroom
Sue	October 22, 1991 12:45, resource room	December 11, 1991 11:40, classroom	February 28, 1992 1:55, classroom	May 11, 1992 12:00, classroom
Katey	October 22, 1991 10:40, classroom	December 11, 1991 10:40, classroom	February 28, 1992 3:00, library	May 11, 1992 12:00, classroom
Leigh	October 16, 1991 12:00, meeting room	December 6, 1991 9:00, classroom	March 3, 1992 7:45, classroom	May 14, 1992 7:55, classroom

Appendix D - Guiding Interview Questions

Interview #1: October 1991

Part 1: Confidentiality

- everything you say in the interview will be kept confidential
- you may withdraw from the study at any time without being prejudiced
- in the study you will be referred to by a pseudonym
- you will get an opportunity to look at the analysis of the data obtained
- the research findings will be used to make recommendations to improve the quality of the next teacher induction program
- all tape recordings will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study
- "choose your pseudonym"

Part 2: District-based Teacher Induction Program

- Q1** How did you find the August Orientation? preparing for students' arrival, planning the first days, introducing routines and expectations, teacher talk and classroom management.
- Q2** How did you find the September Orientation to the Teacher Induction Program? Discussion of program philosophy, goals, roles and responsibilities with administrator, mentor teacher and beginning teacher; Mentor Teacher/Beginning Teacher working together - observation cycle, coplan/coteach/coprocess, teacher talk, classroom management.
- Q3** How did you find the October session on Evaluation and Assessment?
- did you find the materials useful, be specific
 - if you didn't go then why not and how did you get the information about the various topics

Part 3: School-based Teacher Induction Program

- Q4** How are things going now in the school? Is this what you expected? How is the mentoring relationship going? Which induction materials did you find useful classroom management, organization....? Which alternate method of pro-d have you done in place of the district workshops?
- conduct a PMI reflection of the school-based experiences
 - **Positive:** what exciting school/classroom experience has happened
 - **Minus:** what experience has been disturbing/concerns
 - **Interesting:** what interesting/unexpected experience has happened

Interview #2: December 1991

- Q1** How are things going? Is there anything that you would like to talk about?
- Q2a** What does support mean to you as a beginning teacher? Who are you getting support from? (mentor, other teachers, other beginning teachers, administrators, district people etc)
- Q2b** What are your needs as a beginning teacher? Are they being met by the school-based induction program? by the district inservices?
- Q3** Comment on the district inservices:
October (evaluation); November (communication)
• are they useful? explain
• what would you like the next district inservice to focus on for all beginning teachers?
- Q4** Through the induction program, you are given a professional development budget, do you anticipate using it all? Describe the activities that you are considering.
- Q5** How do you think a mentor should be selected? What are some characteristics of a mentor?
- If time permits, then.....
- Q6** Tell me something exciting that has happened to you in your teaching since we last spoke. Thanks for being an important part of this study!

Interview #3: March 1992

- Q1** How are things going?
- your current concerns, needs (now in your 7th month of teaching)
 - the support available to you (Mentor, administrator, other beginning teachers, other teachers etc)
- Q2** Tell me about you:
- Teacher's age
 - age/grade (s) of students taught
 - total number of students taught (subjects if in secondary)
 - description of students (regular, ESL, Special needs, Learning disabled, TMH)
 - anything else about you and your context (teaching situation)
- Q3** Were you adequately prepared to teach in September?
- did the Teacher Education program prepare you for your first year of teaching?
 - did your practicum prepare you?
 - has your perception of teaching changed over the past 7 months?
- Q4** What did you think about the district workshops you've participated in this year?
- topics (which was most valuable? classroom management, assessment, reporting, diversity)
 - formats (morning/afterschool, small group/whole group, focus group....)
- Q5** If you were giving the school board advice about changes in the induction program based on your experiences, what suggestions would you make?
- school program
 - district program

Interview #4: May 1992

- Q1** How's it going?
- Q2** Rate your first year's teaching experience from 1 (poor) to 10 (fantastic). Explain.
- Describe some highlights.
 - Describe some lowlights.
- Q3** Review the Wellington Beginning Teacher Induction/Mentoring Program goal:
- to support beginning teachers as they make that transition from the university to the school.
- Review the Induction components:
- district workshops and school-based support via the mentor and administrator
 - If you could sum up the program in one sentence, what could you say.
 - Did you feel supported in your first year? Explain.
 - Who made the most difference in supporting your teaching this year?
 - What would you have liked more support in?
 - What were some strengths in the program?
 - What are some weaknesses of the program?
 - Were you involved in any other professional development activities other than the workshops offered as part of the district induction component?
- Q4** What are some changes you will make in your teaching practice next year as a result of the induction program?
- What kind of support do you see yourself needing next year?
- Q5** What advice would you give beginning teachers next year?
- How do you see yourself as a support person for next year's beginning teachers?
- Q6** If we were to continue this study, would you be willing to continue in this study next year?

Appendix E - A Transcribed Interview

Interview #1: Leigh

Wednesday, October 16, 1991
12-12:35, meeting room in office

L Leigh
I Interviewer

Transcriber Counter

000

I The purpose of this study is here about first year teachers' experiences and then to design induction programs that best support their needs.

016

I Everything you say in the interviews will be kept confidential.

031

I You may withdraw from the study at any time.

035

I In the study you will be referred to by a pseudonym. Do you have one in mind? Okay, Leigh.

045

I You might like the documentation of your growth and how your concerns have changed over time.

L I'm sure they will change.

055

I The district mentoring program consists of two components. It is district funded. There are district workshops that you can opt to go or not. The only reason we made September a must was because we wanted to make sure that the administrator, mentor teacher and beginning teacher all heard the same language so that everybody knows what their roles are.

L I think that was beneficial.

065

I The second component is what's happening in the school with your mentor and other people who are supporting you to ensure that you will stay in the profession. It's funded by the district.

071

I What are your reactions to the summer seminar?

L I really liked it. I thought it was really nice to get together with the other teachers. From my point of view, it was nice to see who from [the university] is there because I recognized quite a few of the people, get to find out where the people are at, make connections if you wanted to work together. Now I tended to stay with the girl I was already working with but I know of other people that I could connect with if I wanted to do some team planning or something like that so I found that really beneficial. I liked having the session and it was nice especially when we went through the management things. I had thought of everything else and I thought about planning my room. The whole room was completely decorated. That was done way ahead of time. Two weeks before people started so it was all ready but I hadn't gone through

and systematically thought about the first day, step by step by step. In the back of my mind I knew "okay I'm going to do this and this" but having you remind us during that session really hit home that "oh wait a minute, I have to sit down and systematically plan this otherwise it'll be total chaos on the first day." So I found that really beneficial. It just drove home the notion that "look you really have to think about these things" and then we need to think a little bit further than that for today. Okay. I wasn't worry about the first day and I knew I could get all that organized but we have to get beyond the first day. What are those things that we need to think about, the management issues that I want to bring forward, how do I want to work on transition? All those things that you know were mulling around in the back of my mind. Then when you brought it forward in August, it really forced me to put it down on paper. What exactly do I want to do. How do I want to go about doing this? I mean I ended up leaving and working on rules for the classroom with a girlfriend of mine and talking about what do we want to have, what kind of rapport do we want to have in our room. We hadn't talked about it before. It was there, in my head but never really down on paper so I found that really beneficial.

101

I So was it enough preparation for you for the first week of school?

L Oh yeh. I think it was but I also felt really confident about teaching so from my point of view, I found it enough preparation and I had already had a two month long term sub in the summer, so I've sort of already been in there. It was in [Brakerton] for two months. I lucked in. And I had an excellent teacher who I was filling in for. She was on maternity leave. She was just incredible. I learned so much in those two months just from following her dayplans or outlines and all that sort of stuff. So if I hadn't been in that position, you might have included sample dayplans or ways of setting up the day. That might have been helpful but because of where I was coming from, I found that everything you did helpful.

114

I Were there other areas where you thought we could have focussed on?

L No. I think that was really realistic. I don't think you need to go through that. We've all been through our practicum and we all went through our practicum in September so theoretically we should know what that first week is going to look like. And I think maybe the only thing that I would have suggested is reminding people don't go overboard that first week. Like don't plan these incredible things because it's not realistic. It's not going to happen. You know, basically what's happening in the first week is a lot of management in setting up routines and regulations and so you need to keep that in the back of your mind. Don't jump into academics in that first week.

124

I What grade level are you teaching?

L One. So we don't get into academics until January (laughs). I have a K-1 but there's only three K's and they are dual entry K's so they have only been here for six months. It's pretty much a straight one but what's nice about that is that the school is moving towards multi-aging but because I was a new teacher coming in, they did not organize that way but I'm working on multi-aging with my mentors. So we actually combine three classes and we just

started today with a three class grouping. We have from K to 3 in individual cooperative groups and then we are all working together on a total project. They are wonderful in that way. I have two mentors and they are incredible, just amazing... The two mentors that I have, one use to be a first year teacher last year and so they are doing alot of team work and so they would like a third so they sort of adopted me. It worked out really well. I would like to do multi-aging but if they had offered me the job of multi-aging straight off I wouldn't have taken it. If they had said you've got a K-1-2, I would have said I think I will look somewhere else. Because I as a beginning teacher I didn't feel confident in that. This way I have virtually a straight grade but I'm getting all that experience by working with their classes and they know what they are doing so it's like having your cake and eating it too.

152

I So then did you find the summer seminar prepared you somewhat for the beginning?

L Uh huh but I also think as I said before, I was already pretty confident because I had those two months in [Brakerton]. So maybe if you wanted to think about improving, you might have added in some sample dayplans and some reassurance that you are not expected to be heavy into academics that first week because I think many people may have misconstrued that. It's easy to do. You think that "oh I have to get into this" without realizing that "no, no, no, you have to, my kids have to learn how to line up, how to sit still for longer than three seconds", setting the routine before we get into those other things. So that might be mentioned but I'm assuming most people know that because of their practicum. We started our practicum in September.

164

I Anytime you want, if you want to identify a need that you had that you felt could have been addressed at either the district level or that could have happened at the school, feel free to share it.

L Well, something that could have happened in the school is that I could have had a tour of the school to show me where things were. I find that in a big school there's so many people and so many things are going on, you sort of learn things by trial and error. I found out two weeks after school started that we had a sign in book (laughs) that I didn't even know so I'm finding alot of those things out gradually and that might have been helpful to have been shown. And I think that people are showing me where to find things. It's just that they are busy too.

174

I Was your mentor identified early so that she knew who you were?

L Oh yeah, we had decided. They sort of decided that I was on the same wavelength as them, right at the beginning since the first staff meeting. They have been incredibly helpful.

182

I How about the September session when we had the principal, the mentor teacher and the inductee plan and talk about the mentoring program in the morning and then in the afternoon we continued with classroom management.

L To tell you the truth, I really didn't like it. The problems that I had, I found it beneficial to have a chance to talk to the mentor teacher. I found it went on

too long. I know we have to do these opening activities, I completely agree with those. I did them in the classroom too. I just found it a little too long in terms of getting-to-know-you type things. I really wanted to get to the meat of getting to talk to my mentor, finding out what we're going to do so I don't know, that might just be me. Other people might enjoy having those get-to-know-you activities but I personally would have preferred to just get over all that stuff and get into talking to the principal, the mentor and finding out some ideas of what we might want to do in the school because that was really the only official time to talk. The other time - you are going to make that time outside of school but if we are there to do it anyways, I would have preferred to have a longer time.

197

I When you had that time to talk, what happened?

L We had some really good ideas about what we would like to do. It just wasn't long enough to really get sort of those things down. We thought okay we should see one another's classrooms. Well by the time we decided on that it was time to finish up the activity. That was the only problem. I think that because it was something you really wanted to work on, it needed to be a longer time. And I really don't think people would have been off task either because we were all excited about "oh we are going to get to work with this person, what do we want to do" and by the time we thought about what we wanted to do, we were finished and we were going to do something else.

208

I Did you find that this was too early in the year to pull you out with your mentor to talk about this?

L It might have been because we really haven't worked together. It's only now that we have started to work as a group. The three of us. We have talked about these ideas. Yeh it was too early because as a first year teacher, I really want to work with them and I'm just thrilled they want to work with me as well but I have to get my room organized first. I have to get routines established in there first. I have to know what I'm doing before I go anywhere else and so it's building rapport with the kids, it's establishing the routines and expectations in your own classroom and how transitions are going to work - just the flow of basic every day life in your room before you start going anywhere. It's disruptive for me to leave for half an hour. The room is a total chaos by the time I come back.

220

I What would you recommend as a good first meeting where we can talk about the program so that everyone has that same message and to allow for real structured time for mentors and beginning teachers to talk?

L I would have it in the last or third week in September, towards the end of September and you can do the same sort of thing. I just found that the introductory activities took too long and you wouldn't have to do those if you did that later on because we would already know our administrator and our mentor at that time because there we are. We are doing this activity with the principal who I hardly even know and now if we were doing the activity with the principal it would be entirely different and you are also feeling more comfortable with that person. I think in the beginning, at least in my case, "oh now the principal's here". I'm sweating already just as he's walking in

the room.

236

I If you had a beginning of the year school problem, routines or whatever it is, who would you have gone to if you didn't know the structure of the induction program?

L I would have gone and just asked my mentor. But maybe some people wouldn't have done that. I think you could alleviate that whole session and put it at a later point in time if people felt comfortable with the people in their school and I just happen to feel comfortable and if I'm having trouble, I'm going to ask someone, I'm not going to wait until disaster hits. Now I can't say that's going to be the case for everybody. Maybe at this session we could brainstorm who could you talk to in your school and if they didn't feel comfortable talking to someone in their school then what about making connections with those of us who are there because I knew probably about a third of the people who were there from [the university]. And if they were in school and they didn't feel comfortable talking to those people or they were shy or whatever, they could always talk to me. They could phone me and ask me and I would be more than happy to help. I did alot of that in the beginning too. I talked to my girlfriend Juliet. You know, I phoned and say, "this isn't working." We did most of our planning together. Well now that we are both established. You know we still talk to one another but we are breaking more into the groups at school. But it was getting initially ourselves established at our level too. Because I think I couldn't have started working with Sue and Jamie right in September, I would have felt safer to get away because what they are doing is incredible multi-aging and I'm trying to figure out what are we going to do tomorrow in math. I'm in a totally different plane. I think it's important that you realize that if you are having trouble, you can either talk to the people in your school, talk to one of the person's from [the university] or even you guys on the [district resource team].

263

I What about the afternoon, classroom management one. The one with the roleplay?

L I thought that was really good, I thought that we needed it a little bit longer in the behaviour management. The practice, I found that we get off task onto some specific problems and they didn't pertain to me but I think that's going to happen in any case. I'm not sure there's alot you could have done to prevent that. I thought that going through the intervention line was wonderful, with grandma's rule and evil eye. All that stuff is perfect and it's all stuff that we do and need to be reminded of because it's so easy to go from a point of minor misbehaviour to an escalation because you haven't gone through those steps so I found that really helpful. Actually I don't have any complaints about the second session.

275

I What would make it a more valuable day for you?

L Maybe we could have done more than one scenario, like one that might have applied in all areas like a primary example, an intermediate example and a secondary example. We did do that in the roleplay, but the demonstration might have those different levels. I found that when you get into individual groups it still very easy to focus on one person's difficulty and that's going to

happen in small groups. There's no way of getting around that but if the whole issue has been addressed in the large group and if it does happen where you are focussing on one person's difficulty in the small group, you haven't missed out because you've already had it in the large group. That's a bigger time constraint for you. I'm not going to give you suggestions. You have to work them out (laughs).

292

I Why did you choose to go to the October afterschool workshop?

L Because I'm too busy to go to any of the other ones and I know you said don't go to the afterschool one but I just thought for myself, to tell you the truth, I don't want to be sitting around doing fun little introductory activities when I have a lot to do so I figured I'm going for the meat of the stuff. They will only have an hour and a half to do it. It's going to be crammed in there. I'm going to get exactly what I want. No frills.

298

I How did you find that session?

L It was good and I really liked that handout. The handout was fantastic. It reminded me of the things that I know where to assess and I have been but I was thinking that "oh my I'm not doing this properly" and then I looked through and I thought, "wait a minute, I do that", but it's just on a different type of paper but I am doing this and "oh I could do that." I found that the paper was a goldmine.

304

I Was there anything else in evaluation and assessment that you felt would have helped you as a beginning teacher. How do you feel about evaluation? Does it stress you?

L Writing the report card does but that's only because I have to get over the habit of trying to say everything on one piece of paper and I have to let go and realize that we are going to have a parent meeting or a student-led meeting and that information will come across during that meeting and that's only because I've only written one report card in my life and it was stressful. When they were on Work to Rule [in Brakerton], they didn't have any information so I felt like I had to get them an entire assessment of their child and I think that as time goes on I'll feel more confident about that. I'm not sure there's a lot you could do with a first year teacher about that.

314

I How was the October session?

L Again I went to the short one because I just wanted the meat. I'm just so incredibly busy and I know how long these report cards take. When I wrote them in [Brakerton], it took me an hour a kid. I know that's 25 hours of report card writing and it's getting everything organized and reassessing how you are going to say things. All that kind of stuff. Because I tend to be wordy so I have to be short and succinct and that's going to take me longer to do. What I'll do and this is what I did in [Brakerton], I wrote a few and I had an experienced teacher read them and let me know where I could improve and during that time she said "you know it's a little wordy in this particular social area - you said a lot in social development, I think you can eliminate a lot of this and make this into one comment" and that was really helpful. I mean that is a difficulty. I do tend to be wordy and it's nice to get help from

someone else. I'll just get Sue and Jamie to look over them. I give them 3 or 4 and say what do you think of these. How's the format. What's the style? They've devised a format between the two of them on types of comments you could make and so I'll take a look at that as well to help with wording and those sort of things.

335

I Talk to me about the structure of your own school-based induction program. What's happening for you that's making you feel very supported. You've talked about the three of you on the one team - it's fabulous.

L There's alot of teams in the school, particularly in primary so it's very easy to get adopted into one of those teams and I just happened to be lucky enough to get adopted and both of my mentors are interested in multi-aging and so we've been getting alot of experience in that area as well.

341

I What is that team doing for you other than planning and sharing?

L We actually have planning in the school set aside too for multi-aging teams so we have days where we can meet to plan as a team. That comes out of proD funding. The school decided on that last year and it's wonderful. We've already met once. Now Sue and Jamie are totally at a different level than I am. It's very easy to get overwhelmed but the point of meeting in these groups is to discuss ideas. I don't have to be doing the same things that they are doing. We're bouncing ideas back and forth and I'm working at where I am and they are working at where they are and anything that we can bring together we do. So for instance, where all three of us are doing a study on the forest. In my study of the forest, it's much different than theirs and that's because of where my children are at and where I'm at as a teacher. But there's also things that we do together like today we started with doing the multi-age groupings between the three classes and we read a story, sort of a stimulus for adopt a tree activity. The adopt a tree activity we will do tomorrow so those things we do will coincide and as time goes on, I think even more things will. I will lose alot of the structures that I have because I mean I had these grandiose plans for, like a unit a month, and because I never thought that I could study something for three months. It never occured to me. Well I have a feeling that our November unit will get pushed around.

361

I That sharing is very exciting. I think your mentors are learning from you too because you have exciting ideas to share.

L I hope so (laughs). Well I think it's really wonderful to be on a team. It's so much better than trying to go it on your own. I remember when I was interviewed, Bob asked me how do you feel about team planning and I said I loved it. Why would you want to do this by yourself? It's like swimming upstream because you are only going to get so far with your ideas but somebody else can springboard of what you've said and so on and so on and these ideas could just keep building and building and building. You could take what you want and leave the rest. But it just makes so more sense than sitting at home, like I thought I would try to do a novel study because they are heavily into novel studies, but off course we're at an entirely different level in grade one. Our novel is going to only have like 12 pages and I'm going to

be reading it and all that kind of stuff and that's fine - I went home and thought about ideas for the novel study and then when we were getting together, because we decided to do multi-aging, it sort of messed up the plan that I already had with the novel. Well they just helped me with another idea that I could use instead so we could still do our multi-aging. And if I had been at home, all I could think of was adopting a tree at this point in the book. That's all I could think of and how are we going to do that as a group. Now what am I going to do? Well we just spent a few minutes talking about what about this, what about that and I had an entirely different activity to do at that point and I can still do my multi-age grouping with the adopted tree lesson. So just having somebody else to talk to and I think that anyone that works by themselves is crazy.

380

I Having you share this experience is very vital because I think there are different ways that groups operate.

L Well it's the same with kids. You put them in a cooperative group and they won't work together period. And I think that a lot of experimenting will find out which kids will work well together. Same with adults. There's some people who I wouldn't work as well with so you have to find the person who you can work well with and it may only be one person. For a while my girlfriend and I, who's also a first year teacher, were planning together because we were in the same place. As we continued to grow as teachers, we'd phone one another to find out "what's happening. Do you have a good idea", and I can phone her and tell her we did this, this, and this and so she can take that back to her school to see if her mentors want to try multi-aging. But we are each learning from our school and from one another so we have all these different networks.

392

I How are you going to use your money if you are getting all this release already?

L I have no idea (laughs). But the release time in the school on Wednesday is shared amongst teams so we've only done this once. The three of us. What they are trying to do is get primary teams working and so there's a French Immersion team that might use that time one Wednesday and another team might come in and use it another Wednesday. So when you get a rotation, it takes a while before your team comes up. We also meet afterschool.

401

I You are in control of that money. Even if you wanted to spend it on multi-aging conferences.

L I think we'd also like to do some observing of each other and other schools. I know that I subbed at [Macklean Elementary] and that was an experience of a lifetime. I mean walking in from a straight grade one practicum into a K-1-2, it was just unbelievable. I think observing teachers that are doing multi-aging effectively will be helpful. We haven't observed each other yet. We've talked about that. It's just a matter of organizing it all. We have a lot of plans and we have done a lot of planning but we haven't been in to observe yet and we do plan to do that. It's just a matter of trying to structure schedules. When can I go and who can do this. Ten to one, when you have a spare, something comes up where you are dealing with someone else, another

resource person and that you don't get to go there. So that's been the only drawback. It's just trying to organize.

416

I If you were designing the teacher induction program for [Wellington] and it had two components, the district component and the school component, what are some areas that you would focus on especially for the first three months? Are your needs being met? Are you feeling very supported and how?

L I feel really supported, and it's in the school. The staff is incredible. I think that's a big factor. If you have a very warm willing staff, then that can make your first year a whole lot better because that first month, I mean I'm not stressed now, but that first month was awful. I had neurotic parents with all their concerns coming. I think a lot of parents are concerned about first year teachers and whether or not you're capable and maybe you might have added something like that to say "get ready for those parents that come and want to know why you are doing invented spelling and what the heck is this", "how come you haven't corrected this", and want to know what exactly you are doing. "Are you sure you know what you are doing because I know you don't have any experience". That first month was a nightmare, because I would never ever dream that anyone would question what I was doing. I've dealt with them (parents) now but if I had been made aware at first, but, it just never occurred to me. I'm left to my little dreamworld and thought "of course everyone's going to understand invented spelling. They are going to love me. They are going to know that I am the teacher. Of course they are going to think that I am capable. No one will ever question this." And what ends up happening is that for some parents, they see you as a first year teacher. If they happen to know, and in our case, it was put in the newsletter so they knew. I didn't necessarily agree with that but, ah, once they knew I was a first year teacher, all of a sudden they had these grave concerns. Even though I sent home an entire information booklet about everything I do in the classroom, there were still were some people who were unsure.

438

I How did you get through the first month? Did you get support from your mentors?

L I had some really crazy parents and we had a whole lynching ceremony but I mean I think if I were another person, I probably would not have handled it quite as well. Well I talked to my mentor teacher, I talked to the principal and the VP and they were wonderful. And I also had a lot of experience. I use to work for children's aide, so I'm use to this. If I didn't, I think it would have been a disaster. I potentially could have been packing my suitcase and leaving. I never thought anyone would question my experience. I think you should cover communication with parents in the beginning. Parents won't wait until November, some will come in like seething volcanoes and wondering since they've been bothered about it since September. But a lot of parents will come in and say "how come you don't correct their spelling, what do you think you are doing here, why do you do this, why do you do that", and parents who don't understand multi-aging, they are also there with concerns "how come my kid gets kindergartens in their class?" They don't understand that, and so I think you need to prepare teachers and let them

know "hey, start thinking about what you're doing and how you are going to answer without being defensive before those people come knocking at your door."

456

I Tell me one of the most exciting thing that has happened to you over the last six weeks for you in teaching.

L Well seeing things that I never thought I could do in grade one working and I think that comes from Sue and Jamie. Well we're doing alot of hands-on math. Math is incredible. I love math and I came from a practicum where math was very teacher directed, right out of a textbook, worksheets, all that kind of stuff, so I didn't feel alot of excitement in that. I mean there was a demonstration by the teacher and then everybody get down and did X number of pages in the book. So when I started to do Math their [Sue and Jamie] way, I was using all hands- on math. I was encouraged from Sue who said to look through Explorations. The ideas in there are incredible. I was looking around for MathQuest workbook. That's all I could think, and Sue said "no, no no, look in Explorations. You don't need a workbook. Never mind about tha. Take a look in there. I'll help you with any of these games." So I started with that, but I still wanted my workbook. And what got me off track was the administration said we're trying to get away from those math consumables, maybe if you need help from the [district resource team], we can get them. And I said, "I don't need help" but what I wasn't realizing was that I don't need this workbook either, I can do a lot of fun exciting activities without that and I just needed to free myself to say "oh if it's not all on paper that's okay because the kids are doing all the learning through using [things]." I mean I have all these junk boxes. I have tons of stuff that I collected and it was using that and seeing that they loved math". They don't even know they are doing math. I mean today, we did math station for an entire full hour and they just rotated [through] the stations and did all this patterning and it was a hoot compared to if I had given them a MathQuest workbook page and said now colour this square one. That was incredible!

479

I How long did it take you to feel comfortable with the idea that it should all be hands-on?

L It didn't take long. Sue pointed me out to the Exploration textbook and said look at the teachers' guide. The ideas are incredible. If you need any help ask me. If you need any materials, ask me. Then when I couldn't get these workbooks and the administration said to "try to get away from the consumables - if you really want them then.." I then said, what am I going to do know and I went to talk to Jamie and she said "we use scrapbooks. We do all our math in scrapbooks and allow the kids to, what ever the concept is, to draw in their scrapbook or glue or paste, or whatever, but it's all in that book and it's entirely different. And it's not constrained like the workbooks." I had a problem with the workbooks anyways because half the time they don't make any sense. You can't understand the directions.

488

I Why would you want something like that?

L I think I wanted something to show what they were doing. It was more for me so that I could see that they understood that and what I wasn't realizing

was that we could also do this in the scrapbook with less constraints and I could still see the results of what they were learning because I just wanted for myself proof because when I am walking around and talking to the kids, I can find out who knows what but some kids will fall through the cracks when I'm doing that. I wanted another check and they absolutely love these workbooks. I mean, they don't even know they are doing math.

497

I This is exciting.

L They really love math. I'm not kidding you. I came from a workbook "do these pages." My sponsor teacher was like that and then I thought, "no, no, no, I want this to be fun." Math is going to be fun and part of it came from [Brakerton], I have to say, they didn't have any workbooks. They didn't have any textbooks, so the teacher had to do all these exciting and fun activities and you know, and basically the check was there in doing these hands on activities and boy, the learning is incredible in that. I mean, they were working today, with seeds. They had four different types of seeds in one of the stations and they had to make a pattern and the only thing I suggested was that you start with two seeds at first because I have some kids who really have a hard time. They are just at an A, B, A, B, type of pattern and if I didn't give them that type of constraint, they would be totally lost. I mean, it would be pandamonium so it was more for them. For those kids who were ready to do another pattern, no problem, they could go on. And there they were gluing these lima beans, gluing them onto this paper and this is incredible. It's amazing. It was the same thing yesterday when it was the beginning of the novel study and all I ever showed them was the title and the cover. We read alittle bit. They weren't allowed to see any of the pictures and then they had to create their idea of what was happening in the story and they are phenomenal, absolutely phenomenal. And they said, "how come we can't see the pictures" and I explained to them "well I want you to use your imagination. I want to see your thoughts. We'll look at the artist's thoughts later but I want to see yours for now." These are things that you have to let go of. Alot of things that you learned at the university, even though they were very progressive, they weren't as progressive as they could be and that's what I have to let go of. The teacher could be dynamic, amazing and incredible but you have to give the kids a chance to do that too. And I already know that I can do an exciting and incredible lesson and captivate audiences but how beneficial is my performing when they are going to learn so much more doing it on their own. Let them discover what is happening. Invariably they are better than I am because I am still gluing stuff in those stupid math books and my goal is to get the kids to glue it in the mathbook. Last night I was gluing at 7 o'clock and I said to myself "why am I doing this?" I am doing this because I don't think they can glue it. This is ridiculous, of course they can glue it. I'm gluing it because I want it to be in a straight line.

528
End

Interview #2: Leigh

Friday, December 6, 1991

9-9:45, classroom during prep period

L Leigh
I Interviewer

Transcriber Counter

000

I How are things going?

L Really well. Part of it is that the kids know the routines. They are very well established in the classroom so in terms of management, I mean, there is very little management that I have to do and that makes my life a lot easier and I get an incredible support in the school.

008

I Describe the support you are getting.

L Well, the same thing that I talked to you last time. We are still doing the proD where we free teachers up to do multi-age planning. We still have that and so that enables Sue, Jamie and I to do alot of planning together and then they are just really supportive. I mean I can just go and ask them anytime for help.

014

I How often do the three of you get together?

L Well for the multi-age planning, I think we've had three sessions so far this term where we are freed up for a whole afternoon where we can do that planning. Most of the time I get together with Sue informally because she used to teach grade one and she has alot of good ideas. And I can't get Jamie as often because she is working alot with the [district resource team] and so she's in and out of her classroom quite abit.

027

I Describe the release situation.

L One sub is paid for. The three of us are released. Bob goes into one class. The music teacher goes into one class and then the sub is sent into the third class. This is part of the proD plan of the school. It's wonderful. When I complain about math manipulatives, I think well, I'm getting freed up for all this extra time. That makes it worth it. It is so valuable to get together with other people. Like we plan, because we are doing this multi-cultural dinner and we're having one room where we are eating in and one room that will be the static display and what we did was to decide on what can, the three of us, do to make that room a really neat place. Today we are doing a whole multi-aging activity around native people and it's called the earth's cycle. The kids will get together and work on that and in the afternoon we are doing the theme of giving the earth a helping hand. We're making a wreath out of hands of different colours and the kids will do all these really different activities with their buddies. If we didn't have that time to free us up to do that, we wouldn't be as likely to get together because there's so many other things that you are doing.

055

I How was report cards for you?
L It was great. Student led conferences. I wouldn't do anything else. The kids do all the work. I don't have to do anything (laughs). Well I talked to them about portfolios. I've been collecting. They don't understand yet that they can do this too. So I collected work and then I trained them about the week before the conference and they were wonderful and they brought the parents through and they showed them their work. They showed them their portfolios and then all the portfolio work went home and we'll just start the collection up again. The parents are keeping the portfolios. It's better than getting bits and pieces. I think there's different opinions on that. I talked to Sue about conferencing and how to go about doing it and she gave me a file that she had on it. I just basically read that book, Student Led Conferences by Nancy Little, and that has lots of really neat ideas in it. And then Sue suggested videotaping the kids so I videotaped them because I knew that they would run out of things to show their parents. Some of them would, and so when they got stuck or weren't sure what they were supposed to do, they could go and watched the video. That was such a draw. I had parents here for an hour and fifteen minutes. The video was just on the kids - a day in a life of division 16. It was just me following them around, taking pictures. It was pretty funny. The parents could see the different things that we do. I didn't put everything on there. It was 20 minutes as it was. It was pretty long. But they could see what the kids do in music, what are they doing for a language arts activity. And then we had [an environmental group] come and they did a whole integrated forest hands on activity and so I videotaped that. It was really neat. It was alot of fun.

087

I Are your parents supportive of you?
L The parents are wonderful. They are fantastic. I only have one parent. It's the same parent that I had talked about in the first interview but it's just that she's very traditional and what she sort of is coming to terms with is the new program and she hates it. She really doesn't like it. She wants to know why we are not drilling kids on how to spell and all those sorts of things. I've explained the program to her and I've given her things on whole language to read but she's not going to change her mind....

103

L We had a student led conference and then she and I had another two hour teacher conference, which I was kind of worried about but it was fine. She just couldn't understand why I didn't say anything negative about her son. She wanted to know whether there was anything wrong or was it hidden between the lines and I said no. It was good but it was alittle bit long. I was worried about it at first because I didn't know what she wanted, why she wanted to conference. But she basically wanted to know why her son's report card was so great. It was good to meet because in the classroom he won't read and his writing - I mean he's experimenting with some invented spelling and simple sentence frames but that's about it. And yet the day after the conferences, he wrote in his journal a whole page with completely correctly spelled sentences. His mother forced him to do that because she looked at his journal and said, "why are you doing this? Why do you have these pictures? Why do you have this spelling that's not spelt right?" Apparently, he does

have a good sight vocabulary and he can write quite well. I just had not seen him write like that before. So there was a discrepancy in terms of what was on the report card and what she saw at home. And I just explained to her that I had to report based on what I see and that the next report card, obviously since I've seen it now, will be different.

127

I For you as a beginning teacher, what does support mean?

L Support is just having someone there to go and talk to. I can talk to anyone in this school and feel that I have support here. All the other teachers. Peter is my buddy class and so I can go to him and ask him for ideas. He's got grade 4-5. We've done quite a few things together and we're working on trying to put more buddy activities together for January.

138

I What's the duration of your day now?

L Sue's a good influence on me that way because we are going to aerobics together so when she says we're leaving at 4:30, we're leaving. I mean, I just take my box of stuff with me (laughs). No, the day's still pretty long but it's not nearly as stressful as it was in September. I mean the stuff that I'm doing is because I want to do it. Like I'm colouring that math stuff because I want to colour that not because it's some drudgery that I have to do this. It's because I really like what I do and so I want to put 150% into it.

149

I How do you know the kids are feeling good about what you're doing?

L They love coming to school. They tell me that constantly. Their parents tell me that. I mean, you can tell. The kids are happy being here. They really like being here and they say that. They say "I love coming to school." Their parents wrote on the report card. I felt so good. I was reading the report card after and I didn't expect any comments but they are writing things like "thank you for making grade one such an enjoyable year." There's only this one boy who doesn't like coming and a lot of it stems from the fact that he's getting so much pressure at home and he's the son of the mom who I'm having the conflict with over the invented spelling and the whole Primary Program. And she has an entirely different opinion so he hears a lot of that. And then he experiences something different at school and so he says he doesn't like coming to school because we're not just sitting down and then working on stuff. "No, because you have to be able to explain your knowledge in many ways through art, through language and through written." I sort of said to him "you've been surprising me all along. I didn't know that you knew how to write." And I said "I'd be really surprised with what you'll be able to do with Gonzo." Gonzo is a bear that goes home with the kids. He's a little pack sack and there's a book inside him and it's to do with interactive writing. He was just a pillow that you put pyjamas in and I just put straps on it. So he's like a knapsack. I said to him "I can't wait to see what you write with Gonzo because now that I know you know how to write. You've been keeping this a secret. Now I can't wait to read it." And he wrote just oodles. He just wrote in invented spelling and I thought it was really good because I had talked to his mom for about 45 minutes and I tried to encourage her and I showed her the research and I've given her articles. And I thought that was really good so it's probably a lot for her to hold back and

- not correct his spelling.
- 182
I You seem very in touch with the alot of things especially the Primary Program.
- L Well there's stuff I still have to learn. I mean, sometimes I feel like I'm not doing half of it.
- 188
I Tell me about your needs as a beginning teacher.
- L I need materials. Math manipulatives. We have tons of language arts materials in the school. That's fine. It's math materials and science materials. Because science for me is so incredibly important and it is really frustrating to try to run a science program when you don't have any materials. Like I don't mind supplying things but it gets to the point where you start getting frustrated. It's constantly. You want to do something but that material isn't there. So do you go and buy it or do you modify it or what do you do? Or do they go without? Sue has made alot of stuff so she's been lending me her stuff. Like when we did measurement, we didn't have any balance beams. And she had made them out of milk cartons so I borrowed them but next year I'm going to have to make them. Eventually you'll have to make those things which is just another thing ontop of everything else that you are making. It gets to be a bit much.
- 205
I So if you got your supplies met, then it'll make your life easier?
- L Yes, then I don't have to spend all night long making all these things.
- 207
I What else would you need as a beginning teacher to feel comfortable and supported?
- L I think it would be helpful, and I think they've done this before in the school, but again to review the Primary Program with parents. That would probably be helpful. Not just for me but for all the primary teachers because it just takes one parent that has some sort of contradiction to what you are doing and that parent talks to someone else and then everybody's up in arms. They don't understand and it goes throughout the whole Primary Program and then they keep thinking. Some of them have the attitude that it's okay, they'll get fixed in the Intermediate Program or they'll get fixed once they get to grade 4. If that Intermediate Program comes in, they are not going to get fixed the way the parents think and so there's going to be alot of flack with that. I think it'll be alot easier if we get them to accept whole-heartedly the Primary Program before we start putting them into the Intermediate Program. I think the administration should be representative of that communication and also the teachers. If we had sort of a forum. And I think they did do that a couple of years ago but I think that it needs to be done again because parents just don't understand. I don't mind doing that communication as a teacher but you are repeating the same thing over and over again and you're constantly trying to justify what is it you're doing and sometimes you feel like saying "look...."
- 234
L So many parents have the attitude that teachers are running off worksheets and the kids are just sitting there doing these things and it's not the case at

all. Then I run into the opposite. I run into parents who say "how come you're not doing math?" and I say "oh we are doing math. The kids just don't realize it because it looks like we're playing." Because we're doing so much hands-on math and there isn't any record of that. It's all what I see. There are records but the records are minimal compared to what we used to do. Before we used to have a big huge math workbook or there was some math book and you could see all the numbers and you could see that they were actually doing math. But with the new program, the majority of it is hands-on and there's maybe one or two sheets that say "okay, my child understands this concept." And they have a really hard time with that.

250

L

It took me awhile to think of that, because in the beginning I wanted to do it all at once. And I chopped up all the books for the learning logs. They are all ready to go but once I started seeing the kids, I thought "oh there's no way they can do this. They are going to be so overwhelmed", because they are just trying to get into the routines of what we do and then I think that it's really important that you gradually introduce things. And it's like a surprise every time. I've got dictionaries for them in the cupboards. Well that will be a surprise in January. And then the learning logs will be a surprise. There's always something that has to be exciting for them. If it's all at once, then it's overwhelming and it loses the thrill. I've learn this the hard way because I think I'll just go crazy if I try to do all this. I think that's basically what it came down to. I thought this is insane. I can't do this. (laughs). Sue and Jamie are trying to tell me this. They try to scare me out of here. I'm here at 7 O'clock. .. I put the pressure on myself. I want to do everything yesterday. If I have an idea, I have to do it. For the math cards, I took it home. My husband was saying "so you're going to do this math thing, I don't understand why you are colouring them now." I said "I have 24 to make, that's why." So I'm just colouring these things. Theoretically, I don't have to do that. I am better now. I'm not colouring every single night (laughs). It's much better and just in talking to Sue and Jamie, I get ideas that I hadn't thought of before and sometimes those ideas don't require quite as much work because alot of times I make it harder than it has to be and it's just because I want it to be fun. And I'm coming to the realization that everyday doesn't have to be exhilarating. That you can have matter of fact days. It's hard because you have this overwhelming desire to do that. ...

284

L

My kids are amazing. I told Bob the other day because we are doing the whole indepth study on spiders and because last year, their kindergarten teacher had worked on spiders which I didn't know. But it was great because they had that base understanding and we did something that I thought, I'm not sure this is going to work, but I'm going to try it. It's probably going to bomb but we'll try it anyways. We did a sort and predict, no a brainstorm and categorize, and we must have had 80 fact cards up about spiders and the kids were grouping them. I was physically moving them, but they thought about the groups and we worked on where they should go. And then we did a followup research, a beginning research report, on four different types of spiders and it was hard. They must have worked an hour and a half. But they were so involved. I was just standing there going "I'm keeping these

kids next year". I told Sue, "well I'm sorry, but I'm teaching grade 2's next year. " They're just so amazing. I'm just so impressed. I just was standing there saying "I love these kids. They're so incredible." I go home and tell my husband that these kids are so incredible. They really are.

304

I Do you have any special needs kids?

L Well I have one, but he hasn't been necessarily deemed special needs but he is. I have to modify. He does the same things. We all do the same things. But I have to modify my expectations for him and what he does and really support him because he has alot of difficulty just knowing the letters of the alphabet. He's come a long way. Now he knows he doesn't have a "K" in his name. That was a start.

311

I What about ESL students?

L I have two ESL students from Hong Kong. They are doing really well. Part of it is that they are incredibly bright. That's a big factor. Another factor is that the kids in the class are very supportive. I mean, they really look after them. Our class is a family and we talked about that. And you have to help one another. The same with the little boy that needs help from the LA teacher. The other kids just help him. He works alot on the computer but just with number recognition and the other kids who know their numbers will work with him and show him how to do one to one correspondence and pointing. And they will do the same thing with the two ESL kids. They're incredible kids. They really are. I think their last year teacher did a real nice job of supporting them and really helping them to work as a team. All of them. They were already a strong group to begin with and that was really nice. That's why I want to keep them.

331

I How are you going to use the induction proD money?

L I have no idea. Well I haven't really thought about it. We know it's there....

264

L I am saving it for the primary conference in next October....

377

I What kinds of district workshops would you like to see that would benefit beginning teachers?

L You should do something on student-led conferences and some more on multi-aging. I went to one of the workshops and they talked about diversity in the classroom but they were talking about the philosophy and I wanted practical, never mind the philosophy. I already have the philosophy. Let's get some practical ideas here because when it comes down to it. I could end up with a K-1-2 and yes I know that people are doing it and it's working well, so let's hear some of those ideas. And I went to a two day workshop in the summer on that and that was really beneficial but I think, the more you hear about it, the better. That's the reality. That's what the school is moving towards. I'm lucky, I have a straight one [class] this year, pretty well. That's really nice for first year just to get use to having that but that's not always going to be the case. Diversity is just meeting the variability in the regular classroom. I have kids who don't know the alphabet to kids who know how to subtract. How do you address those needs because there has to be that

baseline that everyone has to have and once you establish that and realize that so and so is beyond that, then you are planning activities for that person and this person. You could theoretically be planning for 24 kids. Cooperative learning is helping because what I'll do is pair students off.

408

I What is one thing that you would like to have to make your life easier?

L I think my needs are being met and they are being met by the teachers in this school. Really well. They are wonderful. One of the teachers who comes by every couple of weeks and pops in and says "oh I really love this room. I love what you are doing. It looks like such a warm fun place to be." The emotional support is great. You can always find the materials if you go looking for it, you'll find it. That's why I think the mentoring program is so good because you can find the stuff anywhere, like you can go out and buy a book and photocopy it and get your ideas from that, but if don't have that support, it doesn't matter how much materials you have, you are not going to survive. My two mentors are making this a better experience. The teachers in this school are very supportive of one another and they are willing to give you ideas, support, just when they pass by and make a comment about your room. That brightens your whole day. And like I said, I can get materials anywhere. You can go and spend you money buying stuff, but the people are making the difference.

428

End

Interview #3: Leigh

Tuesday, March 3, 1992

7:45-8:30, classroom before school started

L Leigh

I Interviewer

(transcribed on a hand held counter)

Counter

000

I Today, we need some specific information about you. First of all, how old are you Leigh? How old are your students? What grade level are you teaching? How many students do you have? Tell me a bit about the makeup of your class.

L I am 26 years old. My kids are ages 5, 6, 7. I teach a straight grade 1 class and there are 26 students in my class. I have three ESL students and two other students require learning assistance. Also I have several gifted types.

029

I Did the university and practicum prepare you for this job?

L I think it did in one respect but I think my experience, also my experience, plays an important part. I worked as a childrens' aid in a mental health clinic and I've had lots of experience working in social services and I think that was important in dealing with parents because we get no training whatsoever in dealing with parents. The university communications course teach you how to stand up in front of the room to talk to someone but it doesn't at all prepare you with what you have to deal with. The practicum doesn't prepare you either in dealing with parents... I went to the parent teacher interviews and I had to speak to parents but they were nonthreatening and they are not questioning you because you are only there as an adjunct to the teacher who is responsible to these parents.

048

I Tell me about the parent communication.

L Especially with the Year 2000, even though the program has been going for two years, there are many people who don't understand the program, who hate the program. I don't know how many questions on spelling I have had to answer until I was blue in the face. Even the ministry document on Supporting Learning [was good]. Well only some people have access to that and you can't change people's ideas by just giving them a piece of paper to read. You have to talk to them continuously and you have to be able to show them that this works. You have to take things out like theme books and say look at the amount of thinking this is for a six year old. Never mind the spelling. Just look at the quality of the thinking. The spelling will come along. If we attack the kids about their spelling now, that thinking wouldn't be there.

062

L Even if you think about it in schools, Sue, Jamie and I got together to plan exactly the type of report card we were going to write, what to focus and step by step how we were going to do these report cards. We are taking the same

approach in the classroom like theme books in grade 1, theme books in grade 2 and theme books in grade 3 and if the parents see that this is the thinking we are expecting from the kids, this is the type of thinking we are encouraging and teaching the kids. It's hard. When we ask the kids "well why do you think such and such happens." I have this one little boy who's so frustrated who just looked at me and said "I don't know, why don't you just tell me." He's had it. I was asking him to do something that he is so rarely asked to do. To think. To use his imagination. There is no right or wrong answer here but if they can see that this is what happens in grade one and it's all this inventive spelling, all this inventive writing with it and it's not going to change in grade 2. We are not all of a sudden going to say, at least not in our school, I mean that consistency is all the way through the primary grades. If they can start to see that, I think they can see the progress that really is taking place. There's basically the three of us planning the primary grades. We haven't done as many units together as we would have liked just because I've had all these things coming up. The other teacher has had a very difficult class. Next year we plan to do stints of three month units together and it will be with theme books, all that sort of thing, drama. It is consistent and even though we are not doing the same things, we will be taking the same approach to what we are doing.

086

I Is it because you three are in charge of the Primary Program and that you have time to plan together?

L Well I don't know, I think it's how you look at it. It's your attitude because I think anyone can do this. I get together with my girlfriend and we plan. We planned this mushroom planting unit. I don't know what she's doing now but we jotted down some ideas and we sort of went our own way but I know she's using the theme book approach because I told her look it really works. I saw it. So she's doing that so I don't think it's just the three people getting together and doing it. I think you just have to have the attitude that you want to try this and be willing to try it.

093

I Will you continue to plan with your friend?

L Yes, she asked me what I was going to do for the next three months. Because originally when I started I said in April, we will do this and in May we will do this but definitely these one month fast track stint units, I'm not doing anymore. And so I told her I wanted to do reptile and amphibians and originally I was going to use the "wind and the willows" as the novel but there's a really good series of frogs and toads books out that the kids can read.

100

I Wow, did you discover that?

L Sue told me. I was going to do the "wind and the willow" but Sue said "oh you can do that but have you heard about the "Frog and Toad" series and they are by far an advantage since my kids can read it. My kids can act out the part. We are doing alot of role drama.

110

I How long has Sue been teaching? What about the other mentor?

L Sue for 10 years and Jamie is in her second year. Sue's amazing. She's gone from Ginn series from the three reading groups to this. She's just very

willing to try out different things and to take a new perspective. When I told her about the science boxes, she went crazy because she's had her math stuff for a long time and she really wants it. I strongly think we have to do Science and there's no materials in the school. There's not a way of doing it and I like the ideas of these hands-on boxes where you pull out a box and explore it and some kids are going to get different things out of that and the possibilities are innumerable.

123

I How have your perceptions of teaching changed now that you've been teaching for seven months?

L How I have approached teaching has changed. I'm not doing those one month quickie units anymore and that is a change in perception because I originally thought that you had to bombard them with all these fun different pieces of information and you don't do them in any depth because they are only six after all. And how are they possibly going to understand it in any depth. Then you move onto this next thing and you are just skirting from one unit to the next when in actuality, what they can do is incredible. I mean they listen to this huge this novel, and it was all oral. It was all oral language and then they had to recall. There was so many different things that we did based on the information we read. Many chapters - some of the chapters I had to piece them so that we could get through the information in 15 minutes. That's a long time for little kids to listen and still come away with a really good understanding of what we are doing. Just the way I think about kids and what they are capable of doing. I think that this is much richer. The depth we have gone into in this study on outer space is just incredible. They are not bored. We've been doing this since we got back from Christmas. The activity level hasn't changed. The activity has been varied.

145

I Have you gone to any district inservice?

L (laughs)Valuing diversity but I don't think that was part of the induction program (ESL one).....

153

I Where have you been getting your proD

L From Sue and Jamie and other workshops too... I went to the one on "teacher as learner" on Saturday in February. Two Australian women. That was an excellent workshop. I just go to workshops that I think will be interesting.

I That's excellent. Your induction money is for you to use. Go to any workshops that you want. The district workshops are only offerings.

168

I Comment on the format of district workshops.

L All the formats are fine. I like moving from the big groups into the small groups. Well my only complaint and it's personal. I think the getting-to-know activities is a waste of time. When we went to the workshop put on by the Australian women, from 8:30 - 4:30, they said "we are not going to have you do getting-to-know activities because you can get to know each other on your own time. We have business to do." It was action packed and you left the place with a headache but it was absolutely incredible. Never mind about getting to know your neighbour. You will get to know them simply by working with them. I mean they threw us in groups and I remember they

said to build a free standing structure with eight pieces of paper and tape... go. And they just threw us together and we worked together. We were in a group just because of the numbers on our backs. People have to talk to each other when they are doing the activity together.

190

I What kinds of district topics would you suggest for new teachers?

L Tell them about parents who might drive them nuts. Get primary groups together so they can share what has been successful. Bring in second year teachers and keen teachers like Sue who can say "look have you tried this in your math program?" or those workshops where the Primary Teachers' Association in the district put on workshops. We went to one on "digging for dinosaurs." Those were excellent. They are all primary teachers and it was someone sharing a topic and you could go or not go. There's a lot of beginning and experienced teachers at [these Primary Teachers' Association workshops]. I always think about what I can do to share at these workshops. Maybe my Math games but I have to make it last an hour but I think there is a lot of wealth and resources out there and you just have to tap into it. I am very lucky because I get to tap into it at the school but I know other people who don't talk to their mentors because the mentor works half time and is too busy or the times they get together is so infrequent. For whatever reason it just doesn't work out or that they are mismatched.

210

I How can we make it a better process? What do you think would help the relationships?

L I think that for those who are not working well, they need to know that there are resources in other schools or other places and you need to do this so that it doesn't create hostility. If it doesn't work in the school, then they should know that you can call someone at another school who might have some ideas. I may be pushy but I would just call up someone. You have to try matching at the school, by themselves, by principal or by a list of experts... Somewhat like [the district resource team] but these can be classroom teachers. Maybe going through the Primary Teachers' Association. I would like to take on a [university] student teacher and walk them through all this but I think that at this time for me, it's not possible.

237

L I think the most important thing for first year teachers to know is that you can't kill yourself doing this. I leave at 5:15 at the latest because I go to a 5:30 fitness class. ... Typically, I take one day during the weekend to plan the whole week, then there's not much more you can do. I think that if you go along with these theme books. You do your planning. You outline your theme based on a novel or a series of books you are going to use. Everything just falls into place.

243

I Did you hear about these theme books at [the university]?

L No I never heard about this at UBC. I talked to Se and Jamie. [The university] doesn't tell you about this stuff. They tell you the bare bone. You take these methods classes and you've only got a couple of weeks. They cram all this stuff into you. I think you can be a successful teacher based on what

they tell you but you are not going to go as far as you could because they don't have the time to challenge you or they don't have the thinking. They haven't changed their way of thinking.

249

I What's your secret for becoming such a great teacher?

L I want to be a great teacher and I don't like to take all this time. I guess I seek out Sue and Jamie to find better ways to manage my time. Because they use theme books and they are just opened to different suggestions. We go to workshops and we try out different things. I had a very structured sponsor teacher who was a workbook person and that was it and so it really depends on what you've been exposed to and if that's what you've been exposed to, it's very easy just to do that. It's like a sink or swim type situation. All you are trying to do is get through the first year. If there is somebody out there who says "oh you could try this", and if you are secure enough in the basics of your program, then you will be willing to try this. Not everyone would try this and I'm certainly not encouraging them to because there are people who are just trying to survive with managing the classroom and everyday organizational stuff. To me that's the easy stuff.

260

I How did you manage to do this?

L You have to have fair and reasonable discipline. I'm consistent. I have to review every so often, [for example] if they've come back from holidays and no one knows anything. I may have to do that for two days... But if you don't do that anarchy breaks out. It's just common sense. For example when the kids were playing leap frog after the break, I had to spend a day reminding them that it wasn't appropriate. I had expectations.

275

I What advice would you like to give to the school board to improve the induction program?

L To welcome the new teacher into the school, it might be nice to show them around the school and they didn't have to find things on their own. No one remembers that. They did that for the substitute teacher, "here's the staffroom and here's what's on in the school."

I Who should do this?

L An older teacher who would be willing to do that. There should be a welcoming committee who says "hi, welcome to the staff. Let me take you around and show you the ins and outs and give you all those things that no one tells you."

287

I Anything else?

L Tell them about parents. This is not done at [the university]. That has to be done. Public relations is important. I happened to be lucky because I worked for Childrens' Aid. I worked for the Ministries where you have to go talk to these parents and your message has to be clear and heard. At this school we had a workshop on conflict management and it was incredible. We had a trainer for two days. That wasn't enough. We need more. Those kind of approaches really start you thinking. One of these days you are going get someone who comes into your class and screams at you. Inches from your face. What are you going to do, cry, run out of the room, yell back? You have

to know how to deal with that. [University] doesn't teach you that.

299

I Tell me about the parent.

L This is the one I told you about in September. This parent doesn't agree with the Year 2000 and the Primary Program. Her child got into a fight with another child and I talked to the parent and I really didn't think it was a big deal. I met the mother with the LA teacher and the parent got out of control and slammed her fist onto the table. Basically they don't like the Year 2000 program. They don't think that I am doing enough to further their son's education like "why doesn't he get any homework. Why is he being given the option to learn?" They think that there shouldn't be a choice and I was trying to explain it from my point of view. My philosophy that children need to get responsibility for their own learning and it's not that you sit out there and do nothing. Of course not, you can have options. You can do it now or during center time. I mean, it really is not an option, but he thinks so. But there is some responsibility that the child is expected. I'm not going to hover over somebody and say "excuse me, you didn't do this one." I don't believe in that and I think it's hard for the kid at first if they are not use to that but that they do develop that responsibility and they carry their learning even further than I could because they know where they want to go. You put the activities out for them and they explore them and it's there. These parents don't understand that philosophy.

322

I How are you dealing with this parent?

L I've told her she isn't welcomed in the class. When she is in the class she is negative to kids and other parents. She makes me nervous. One day she came in and yelled at me in front of the class. I told her in future she needs to make an appointment to see me. Then she went out in the hallway to tell other parents about me and that I was tormenting her son. My concern was that I wasn't tell parents about her and I want to have a job next year. I don't want parents to hear those things.

340

L My principal was supportive and gave me an option to report this to the Board or not and I chose to report it. I think alot of first year teachers wouldn't do this. You are scared to death. I even said to him, "am I going to be in trouble? Is there some kind of repercussion?" I mean, the Board doesn't know who I am. I'm just Joe teacher. They have no investment in me and for all I know they could be saying that, "here I am another teacher rocking the boat." That kind of stuff you can tell first year teachers. I knew to bring the LA teacher with me. I've had enough problems with this woman and I wasn't going to meet with this woman by myself. This sounds awful but they need to know that legally. They need to have someone else there as a witness. Bring this person there so that it's not you against the parent . It's their word against your word. Sure your school is going to back you up but you can't go any further than that but if somebody else sees someone totally out of control, then they can and say "yeh, I was a witness to this and I saw this woman screaming and yelling and slamming her fist on the table." Then you can have some support and backup. And they don't teach us that.

361

L I'm sure that a lot of first year teachers go through this. Especially when the parents find out that you are fresh out of university, they say "ah ha" and when you are going to teach the Year 2000 they say "ha hum." And if they don't agree with what you are doing or they say "um, a little too strict, she wants the kids to raise their hand." Whatever the reasons and they may have valid concerns. In any case, they are going to make a complaint and a lot of first year teachers would have said "that's it. I'm out of here", and I contemplated that. I was thinking that "I don't need this, I could be a garbage person for this much money." You have to be an extremely strong person to go through this. And the only reason that I got through this is because it took me a very long time to decide what I wanted to do and I have to change my way of thinking." Okay, this stuff can happen." There's a lot of first year teachers who would have said, "I'm out of here." So how many people do you know who would put up with someone screaming in their face. Questioning everything that they are doing, and you have to be able to justify what you are doing. You are being put on the spot. You have to be able to justify your philosophy, your approach, your discipline, everything. I don't mind having to justify it to the administration. My evaluation is nothing like this.

372

I On the bright side, what's been great for your teaching and for you?

L Well all these math games. Learn what's inside the discovery boxes. I'm going to make some. These theme books. All those sort of things. Just imagining what the kids are going to do. I love to be able to carry these books around and say "oh have you seen this lately" and then pull them out.... and when I see my principal I say "oh Bob my friend...." I am just amazed at what kids can do and they really do us a disservice at [the university] by not telling us to stretch the kids. "You are parenting. You are trying to survive. Just blast them with bears and then move onto something else." This has absolutely no relevance. This is the wrong advice.

380

I Your advice is...

L You have to challenge kids. You have to give them the information. They are going to tell you when they can't handle it. My kids are talking about meteorites and outer space exploration. They are asking the expert visitor questions. You have to give the kids the benefit of the doubt that they are capable of doing these things, and yes they are five. Yes they are six. You have to adjust your expectations. My dual entry kids that can't handle the writing, they can still do the thinking in their theme books. My ESL kids who don't have a clue of what we are doing can still do parts of what's going on. I think you have to give them the benefit of a doubt. ... No they can do one of three theme books during the year. They are amazing. They are getting good reinforcement.

393

I What about administrators?

L I think administrators need to be supportive of teachers and tell teachers they don't have to put up with this kind of stuff (from irate parents). There are actions you can take. Someone doesn't have the right to come and scream in your face in your classroom anytime and put you on edge. I told my

administrator "look I'm tired of going to Safeway and expecting this woman to be lurking in the aisle." I'm not going to put up with that. This might be unrealistic situation in Safeway, but I know I will feel much better if there is some legal action taken saying, "you can't come and scream in the teacher's face and you can't make all these accusations about her outside the classroom. There's a law behind this. This is illegal. You cannot do this." And parents have far too much control in terms of what they can and cannot do.

401
End

Interview #4: Leigh

**Thursday, May 14, 1992
7:55-8:30 a.m., classroom**

**L Leigh
I Interviewer**

Transcription Counter

000

I Rate your first year experience on a scale of 1(terrible) to 10 (outstanding) and tell me why.

L I'd like to say 10 but I'm going to have to say nine because of that parent. The good thing is that I stopped feeling guilty about that because this woman hated me. What have I done for you to start questioning me? Well maybe I am doing something wrong but you have remove yourself from that and you have to look at that from a second point of view. I think if I hadn't gone to the steps to pursue this woman from bothering me, it would have gotten worst and it would have made me miserable. So I stopped and said, "look, this has got to stop." My prime motivation was that I didn't want her to do it again to Sue or Jamie next year. That was my initial thinking. Otherwise, I might not have pursued it because I like to avoid these things.

021

I What are some exciting things that has happened to you this year?

I Everything. Theme books. All these math materials. I think they are incredible. Actually the math materials. I made all those. Since I got so excited about those Science discovery boxes. I'm going to make Science Discovery boxes this summer. Science and math have been the most exciting for me. I hated math and science in school. I absolutely hated it. When I saw on that [university] thing that you had to take Science methods and math methods, I thought this is it. I'm going to fail right now. I can't do this. The professors at [the university] made the difference with the hands-on science...also realizing that it can be done and talking to people with similar ideas. And you just go and pull out all this stuff. The kids are very open-minded. They are very supportive. They are willing to try anything. Their enthusiasm has spurred me on. When we had this mall for math. They are running around and buying things and at one point, I was just standing there saying, "wow, look at this. They are selling things to one another and they are bartering back and forth." There are kids with no money helping some of the kids. Some of the kids were charging GST. They've come up with this on their own. When you see that kind of stuff you think, "how can you possible do the math workbook?" I still use worksheets to check the kids understanding of the concepts but that's done later at a center. It's a quick check and I know right then and there who understands and who doesn't. Rather than me saying that okay, you don't know how to add 4+7 and therefore you are a math failure in grade one. They're doing it. They are making it. They created this whole mall. They kept saying "can we shop at other stores in the mall?"

057

I The Wellington Beginning Teachers' Induction/Mentoring program goal was to support beginning teachers as they made the transition from the university to the schools. There were district offerings and school based support through the mentor and administrator. If you could sum the program up in one sentence, what would you say?

L I think it is a great program. I think the idea of putting mentors in the school is fantastic. I can't imagine anything more frightening than going to a school, being a first year teacher there, and no one is there to welcome you or help you. The whole program is wonderful. Having those people there. Even for those people who didn't click perfectly with their mentors, I'm sure they got some support. And that's better than nothing. And in my case, my mentors were fantastic. maybe you can send a letter to the administrators to remind them that beginning teachers should get a tour of the school. It would be a good idea to let them know about accessing supplies. For example I only got 15 gluesticks at the beginning of the year and I thought that was my year's supply. When I went to Sue to tell her about this she laughed. And you are naive. You think that everybody is doing the same sort of thing that you are. And they are not. You are the only one going, "you mean I shouldn't be volunteering to have my prep time on Monday and Friday. Oh, why's that?" You know how many preps I missed. What an interesting coincidence. Both my girlfriend and I are first year teachers and we both have Monday and Friday preps. The prep people suggest it you and you say "oh isn't that nice."

097

I How have you been supported this year?

L Through the school mentors. And also the program. Now I only went to about two sessions but I did learn alot from the ones I went to. Especially the one on report cards. There was one, - I don't know whether that was from mentoring, - it was on valuing diversity.

104

I Have you gone to very many district offerings besides mentoring?

L I've been to alot of sessions this year. We went to a math workshop in March and we came away with ideas that were incredible. I haven't incorporated alot in my classroom but I've tried them in my class. They are not ready for them right now. Some of the concepts are very difficult. But Jamie and Sue are just soaring with theirs. I'm just thinking with my K-1-2's next year, I've got that resource to choose. But just going to these things and finding out is great.

116

I Who has made the most difference in supporting you this year?

L Sue. She's the experienced teacher. The old hand. Probably because she's had all this experience and she's so calm and wise. She's been through all this. She's seen it all and she's seen so many changes. She started with the basal readers and all of that. So she's been through alot of changes and she's very much in favour of change. She's whole-heartedly supports that. We are having alot of controversy within our school over multi-aging and combined classes. Just awful. And it's just nice to know that you don't feel like you are the only one out there. There's at least three other people who have similar beliefs. And you can keep going with your program knowing that they are there. It's hard to explain to other people. They walk by and

they say "isn't it nice. They are "playing" all day." You can't see everything that's behind it. Like something like this. It looks like a fold-out castle with printing on it. Well this took four days to do. Never mind the learning that went in here. But all the mechanics in trying to make these things.

148

I What would you have liked more support in in your first year?

L I would have to go back to that parent. I got support at the school. That is really a loaded issue. It really is. Fortunately I had alot of past experience. I think I had an better time dealing with it. Although it was still hard for me. I can't imagine not having a background in dealing with that kind of conflict and being confronted by those kinds of things. And you are confronted daily. People walk in here and say, "oh, why are the kids sitting on the floor playing?" I had a mom walk in and say, "are you doing anything important today or are you just doing this?" And we are in the middle of these incredible stories. I made a joke to her and said, "we always do important things here." And she was that kind of person who you could joke with. But that kind of attitude is out there. And the parents do not understand. We keep on trying to pull them into the school. We did a whole thing on multi-aging the other day and we had seven parents come. There were more teachers than parents. ... In September, forget about doing all those fun things that you did. I'm sorry. Maybe do one of those get to know things. That is important but you have to tell them the realities. We think we are going to have so much fun. You don't think about those parents who are going to walk in here and say, "excuse me. Why aren't you teaching my child how to spell?" And then you give them the patent answer from the Primary Program and hope that they will go away. Well they don't just go away. They keep coming and some of them get even more insistent. And tell you that the whole program is going down the drain. You really have to be accountable. It's not enough to know that answer in the Primary Program binder. I tried it. It doesn't work. You have to bring them in here. You have to show them but you have to take an incredible risk to invite them in here. Some of them will not be people you want in your class. But first year teachers have to be told that there are parents out there who are not going to support you. They are going to try everything that they can to undermine what you are doing. You have to be strong. You have to be sure of what you are doing. And you have to have the skills to deal with that conflict. Even some kind of conflict resolution workshop would have been wonderful. That role play is good. Roleplaying a parent is good. These parents come in and they scream in your face. This mom screamed at me in front of the whole class, me and her son and this other little boy. And I know all this stuff and I just stood there letting her scream me. All I could think of was I hope she leaves.

189

I What were some strengths and weaknesses of the program?

L There are alot of strengths. Hooking first year teachers up with other teachers whether they are second year or third is a definite plus of the program. Having the money there is a nice idea. Maybe you should include some suggestions as to how to spend it. I don't know if anyone else has had any problems spending it. You see, we have those half days to plan with each

other already so I feel that I have this wealth of time. There's even been times when I have passed on those half days. The weakness is to ensure that you tell the teachers about the parents. And maybe another thing is on report cards. I found the one I went to be really valuable. We've got to find a way to make them shorter. Sue, Jamie and I have sat down and came up with a whole plan of writing report cards.

215

I What kind of support do you see yourself needing next year?

L Probably the same kind of support that I am having now. I will continue working with Jamie and Sue. We will keep working as a team. We will keep sharing our ideas. I will keep that sort of school relationship going. In terms of the district, they should continue to offer the ProD. They really do have excellent workshops. I've been to alot of them. In fact, if you have the money in the school, you can go for that.

223

I What kind of advice would you give beginning teachers next year?

L Just relax. Don't worry about things. It doesn't matter. I think you get caught up. Even in grade one everyone has to read. And you know logically that is not the case and that everyone develops at their own pace. But you have stop pressuring yourself. I really think that beginning teachers do that. They think that they have to be incredible. That they are jumping through hoops to show that they can do all this stuff. We are capable. The district would not have hired us if we weren't capable. You have to sit back. Do your best but don't worry. I was panicking over this little kid didn't know that moose started with the letter "m." "Oh no, he needs LA help." And then I actually sat down and thought about it. I thought "okay, what do you know about him? Well he just came into the school. Well go read his report." I found out that he is dual entry. Here I was going nuts thinking that this grade one kid didn't know that moose started with the letter "m." And he was dual entry. I had no idea what his past background was like. I thought "this is just insane. This little kid almost went the the LA teacher." The most important thing is that if your kids are having fun and they enjoy coming to school, then you are doing an excellent job. Because you do. You start thinking "maybe, I'm not doing a good enough job. My God, someone in my class doesn't know the letter "m." The thing is the kids come along so much. I've seen so much growth in my class. And first year teachers have to get out of the classroom. I mean I use to stay here until 7:30 planning all this and then I would cart all this stuff home and at 11:00, I'm still doing stuff. Now thanks to Sue I go to aerobics. Do some exercise. That's some mental health right there. And if you have to do something in the evenings, then do it but you've got to do something else in between there. You can't stay here until 7:30 because you just become miserable.

251

I How do you see yourself as a support person for next year's beginning teacher?

L Oh I'd be happy supporting other beginning teachers. I would tell them the facts. I'll tell them the real truth. I'll tell them what it's really like. I would happily volunteer to be a mentor. Someday I would like to be a sponsor teacher but I need more experience.

264

I If I were to continue this study next year and based in on second year teachers, would you like to be part of it?

L Sure.

266

I Any last minute comments? This is our last interview.

L Good luck with all your stuff. I hope things work out well.

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I You've been a great success story!

L Thanks. I'm glad I was part of your study!

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End